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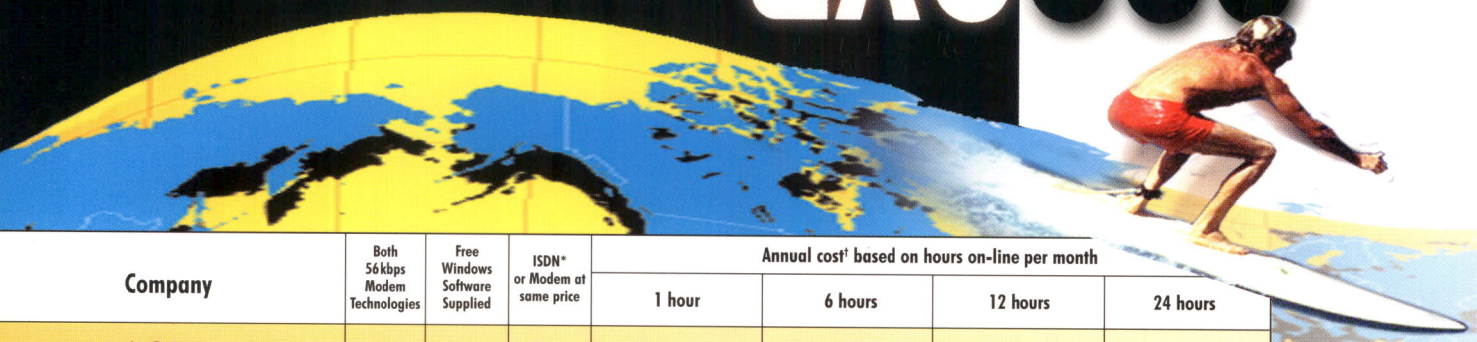

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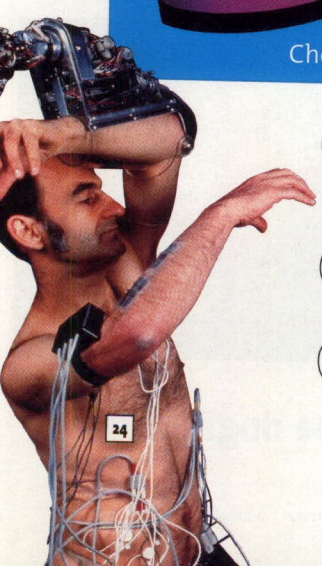

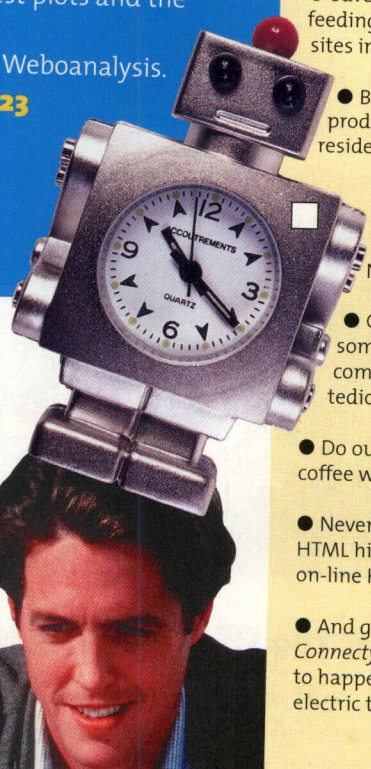

Each issue of Connect we stubbornly pledge to...

- Take the doldrums out of frustrating down-load times by stuffing our *Connect* CD with the very best movie clips, music videos and game demos knocking about the Net.
- Save you on-line time and money by feeding you with the tastiest, flakiest Web sites in the world.
- Bring you the hottest Net news and prod the latest cyberfads courtesy of our resident know-it-all Brain. In a jar.
- Tell you where and when you can Webchat with the stars and frug along to on-line concerts in our Net Events Diary.
- Give you the chance to win something at least once an issue with a compo that doesn't include giving away tedious Web Design books.
- Do our utmost to make you spit out your coffee with the odd stupid caption.
- Never lapse into confusing technobabble, HTML hieroglyphics or glowing reviews of on-line Klingon Language Courses.
- And generally convince you in our own *Connecty* way that the Net is the best thing to happen to home entertainment since the electric television.

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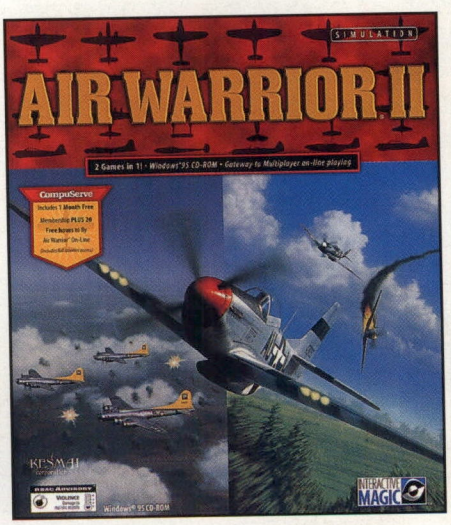

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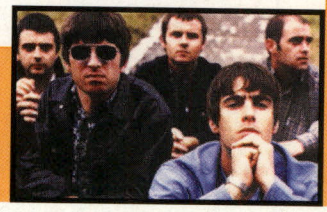

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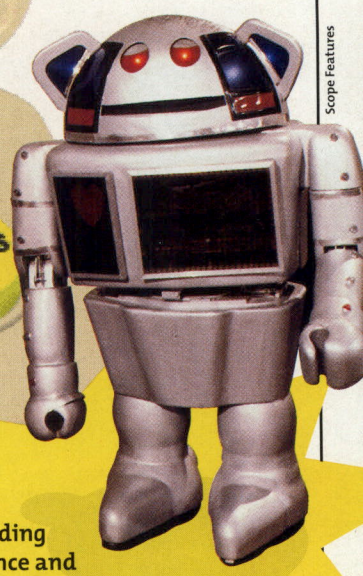
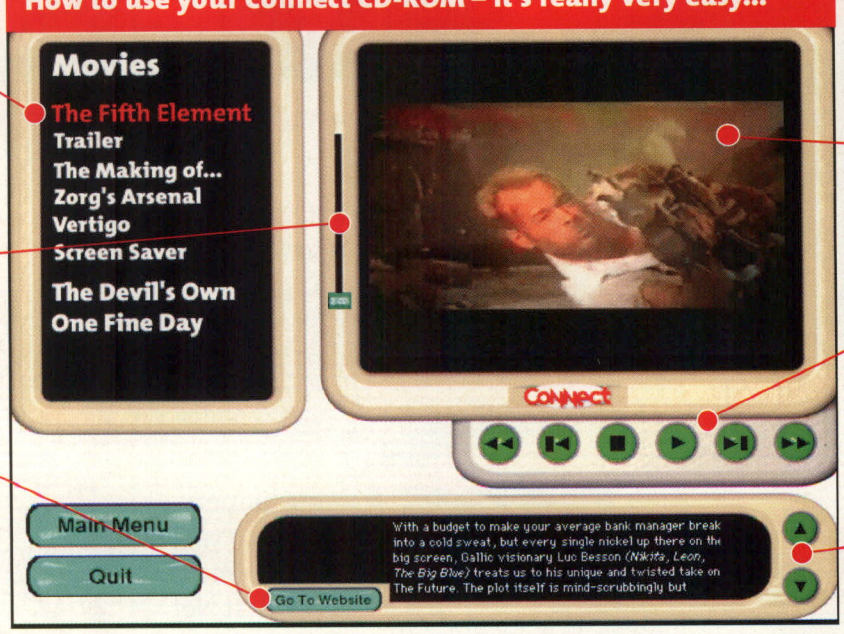
Let's Off-Load!

Your guide to what's on the world's first Net Entertainment CD



Providing guidance and saying stupid things when you click on the buttons this month: ol' rusty gob himself, Mr Metal Mickey!

How to use your Connect CD-ROM – it's really very easy...



Select the clip you want to watch by clicking on the name in the menu bar.

Volume control – slide up for loud, down for not so loud.

Stab at this button and your browser is fired up to link you automatically to the relevant Web site.

Click on the screen to shrink or enlarge the video clip.

Forward, rewind, pause and play the video of your choice with the remote control icons.

To read about each clip, simply use the arrows to scroll through the info-bomb box.

Movies

The Fifth Element

http://www.fifthelement.co.uk/

With a budget to make your average bank manager break into a cold sweat, but every single nickel up there on the big screen, Gallic visionary Luc Besson *(Nikita, Leon, The Big Blue)* treats us to his unique and twisted take on The Future. The plot itself is mind-scrubbingly but satisfyingly complex, sucking in alien invasions, an apocalypse-inviting weapons trade conspiracy, the hunt for a mysterious life-giving force (the fifth element of the title), and the survival of the human race itself. Time for a bleached-blonde Bruce Willis to kick some collective alien arse...

With an eclectic, eccentric cast featuring Gary Oldman, Jean Reno, Luke Perry and rubber chimp Lee Evans, its premiere in Cannes was met with enthusiastic whoops of approval, not only for its SFX-stuffed action sequences but also for its gobsmacking originality, which, let's face it, has been pretty much absent from the sci-fi staple since Ridley Scott's *Bladerunner*. We heartily recommend you grab the Shockwave plug-in and cruise around the state-of-the-art official Web world.

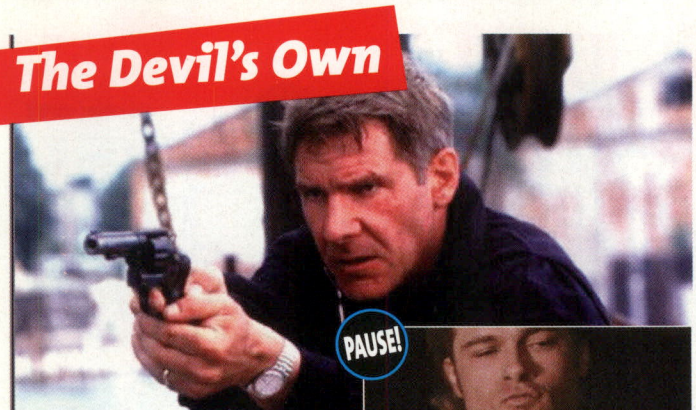
Bulging with clickativity, cyberstab through The Elements for interactive treats – Fire supplies the Shockwave games and a storming 3D action game in VRML, while Water throbs with exclusive interviews, shiny piccies and the chance to space-mail Monsieur Besson. Far from just being some studio's electro-ad, this is one of the flashiest movie sites you'll have seen in a long time. The clips you'll find on the CD include the stunning theatrical trailer, two exclusive SFX sequences from the film and a 'Making Of' montage quivering with How Did They Do That!? stunts. All that *plus* a Mac and PC screensaver? You're being spoilt and you know it.

See the 'Vertigo' clip for an SFX-packed treat, complete with retina-friendly CGI sequences.

The standard but ace Bruce Puffing His Cheeks And Firing A Gun pose, from the in-yer-face trailer.

Careful clicking through the 'Making Of' clip gives you a sneak peek of them ET beastie effects.

The Devil's Own



Switch to slo-mo in the shooty bits to reveal an as-yet unseen side to Brad Pitt. Gurner!

http://www.spe.sony.com/movies/features/devilsown.html

Guaranteed to dominate movie column inches on its mid-June release, this controversial thriller from Alan J Pakula *(All The Presidents Men, Presumed Innocent)* has Noo Yawk cop Harrison Ford inadvertently inviting an Irish-accented Brad Pitt into his home. While the female population may not have a problem with this, Harrison inevitably gets the sweats when he discovers that Mr Pitt is, in fact, one of the IRA's top gun runners...

To find out more about this tense, finger-chewing thriller, first see the trailer and then click on the *Connect* Launch button to be instantly linked to excerpts of the soundtrack and character profiles (including a lovely pic of Brad Pitt choking inside a balaclava). Also on site is *The Devil's Own*'s Web game, The Manhattan Maze, which has you chasing around narrow streets, nabbing wads of cash and legging it after the neon bad guys. Yay! Pacman and terrorism together at last!

One Fine Day

Michelle Pfeiffer juggling with the contents of her bra. Found the level already, then...

http://www.onefineday.com/

Aaaaah, they don't make 'em like they used to... What with a summer movie season dizzied with psychos, dinosaurs, bullets and bat brawls, it may come as a relief to learn that Hollywood '97 isn't all about chest-beating blockbusters. *One Fine Day* is what American critics have probably labelled The Movie You'd Most Like To Take A Date To.

Starring George "Batman" Clooney and Michelle "Cat Woman" Pfeiffer (with not a pair of rubber Y-fronts in sight), the story's sparked off by a spooky cellular phone coincidence and centres around two single parents who are forced to spend a chaotic day baby-sitting for each other... Cue ace Woody Allenesque wisecracks and the odd game of tasteful tonsil hockey thrown in for romantic measure. *When Harry Met Sally* for the '90s? Go on then...

On site you'll find loads of sassy sound bites and a drooler's gallery of collectible pics. Obligatory idiot note: anyone caught kissing their monitor risks ending up with lips the texture of a dry roasted peanut.

Television

The X-Files

It's back from the dead, it's made out of clay and it looks like Billy Ray Cyrus. Scream! It's a golem!

http://www.sky.co.uk/one/xfiles/index.htm

Despite Gillian Anderson's recent dabblings in the realms of trip-hop (see the Music section opposite), *The X-Files* is still the place for all true Scully and Spooky obsessives. This latest series is the most unsettling yet, and Sky's site will soon be undergoing a massive overhaul to contain such paranormal perfection. Worry ye not, though, X-O-Phile: the mighty Sky has still deigned to include an extensive episode guide, cast profiles and, as a special treat, some rather attractive pictures of ALL the cast members. So no just looking at the Scully ones. There are two clips on the CD this time: the first is taken from the episode 'Kaddish' (starring the golem, a Jewish monster made out of clay); and the second is from 'El Mundogira', where Scully and Mulder face the Mexican goatsucker.

The Simpsons

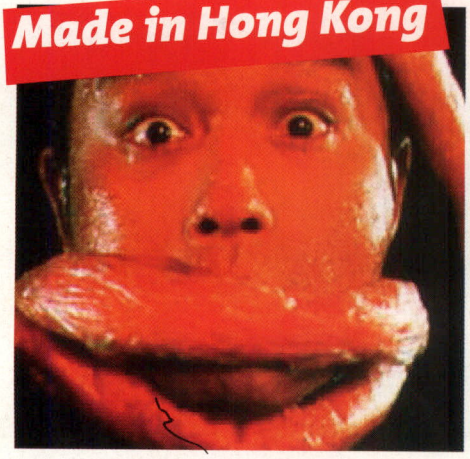
Matt Groening/BSkyB

We were going to feature the death-by-pretzel bit, but it makes even less sense than this one....

http://www.sky.co.uk/one/simpsons/sky.htm

Matt Groening's yellow perils are the greatest animated treat ever to grace a boob tube and, as the merest tiptoe on the Net proves, just about anyone with a modem agrees. Nine series in, Sky One's *Simpsons* site offers many a Homer-related treat, from Bart's infamous phone pranks ("Hey, has anybody seen Mike Rotch lately?") to the most clickable sound files. With Barney-sized changes planned for Sky's virtual Springfield, there's no better time to just say, "Doh!". 'The Twisted World Of Marge Simpson' sees Marge investing $500 in her own pancake franchise and confronting Investo The Robot from the planet Opportuniac. 'A Millhouse Divided' has Homer holding a dinner party and doing something quite disgusting with a toothbrush. A clip from each is on the CD.

Made in Hong Kong



http://bravo.flextech.co.uk/

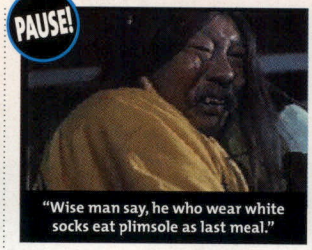
Relaunched earlier this year, Bravo has evolved into a barmy celebration of all things cult, kitsch and cathode. Revered in the cable world as broadcasters with balls, its *Made In Hong Kong* movie season (starting in June) kicks off the first in a series of *Bravo/Connect* collaborations. We heartily recommend you take a quick click on the weird side and saunter around their dark, daft and immaculately-designed Web site, which is stuffed with oddball clips and info on all Bravo's shows. And don't forget to check out the ads on the CD-ROM, starring a cat-licking John Noakes. No, *really*...

Hard Boiled

Mmm... Orange-flavoured explosions.

Set in the Hong Kong of 1997, acclaimed action director John Woo assaults your senses with a tough urban landscape where police and gangsters have awesome artillery at their disposal. Inspector Yuen (Chow Yun-Fat) shoots from both hips and never misses, but his over-zealous actions lead to the deaths of two cops, one of whom is his partner. He's reprimanded by his boss, Chief Superintendent Chan (Philip Chan), but Yuen is determined to carry out justice, even if he has to take the gangsters on single-handedly. Yuen soon meets Tony (Tony Leung), the soulful right-hand man who betrays his gangster boss to his rival. Tony has a dangerous secret and, with a twist of the plot, these two men are united in a shared mission. With bikes, brawls and balletic bulletfests, the clip on the CD shows a set-piece assault on the villain's industrial warehouse.

Buddist Fist

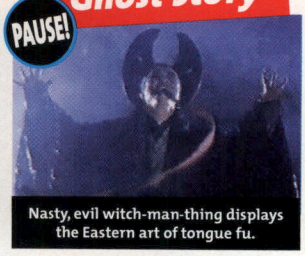


"Wise man say, he who wear white socks eat plimsole as last meal."

From the legendary director of Jackie Chan classics, *Drunken Master* and *Snake In The Eagle's Shadow*, comes the tale of two orphans, trained by a Shaolin master in the deadly art of the Buddhist Fist. Separated by fate, they're finally reunited after a series of disasters in lethal combat.

Yuen Woo Ping's trademark furious action choreography is combined with extraordinary lead performances from Tsui Sin Ming and Yuen Hsin Yee in what is generally agreed to be one of the all-time kung fu classics. And to show you just how ace it is, we've got two different clips. The first features an eyebrow-raising display of Eastern acrobatics, as the OAP master windmills his fists into an anonymous, serial somersaulting ninja. And just for a change of pace, the second is a Shaolin's guide to moustache trimming... Uhhh?

Chinese Ghost Story



Nasty, evil witch-man-thing displays the Eastern art of tongue fu.

Prepare for your gob to be well and truly smacked... Combining mystical erotica, gut-squirming horror and outlandish special effects, *Chinese Ghost Story* mixes the extraordinary talents of producer Tsui Hark, director Ching Sui Tung and Hong Kong screen idols Leslie Cheung and Joi Wang to stunning effect. A truly berserk supernatural spectacular, rich with breathtaking SFX and mind-blowing combat scenes, it demolishes all known genre boundaries with its blistering originality.

Take a look at the clip and you'll see exactly what we're going on about, with a frenetic two minutes of tongue lassos, killer trees, demonic fireballs and a massive neon flying sword. Bash into Bravo's site to find out more about the movies featured on *Connect's* CD, including a kung fu linkfest and a gallery of chop-socky action pics.

Music

Grappler Baki

Fisticuffs and comet streaks. Mr Cord Cutter going for a slash.

http://www.manga.co.uk

No one knows where Baki Hanma came from, but if this first episode of *Grappler Baki* is anything to go by, the doe-eyed karate kid won't be leaving in a hurry. Unfortunately, he's somewhat up against it, as he's entered the Shinshinkai Organisation's tournament and must face Kosho Shinogi – the sinewed headcase they call the Cord Cutter...

Grappler Baki is Manga's latest release. You'll find it backflipping across its Web site alongside the brand spanking new on-line cybercomic from *2000AD's* David Milligate and Robbie Morrison. And the title of this newly-penned masterpiece? *Bone 'Ed: Chainsaw Messiah.* Bunch of charmers, the lot of 'em.

The Kingdom

A human fruit bowl from the first *Kingdom* clip. Take a guess where the melon is.

http://www.manga.co.uk

Lesson one: when building a new hi-tech superhospital, do *not* build said complex on a patch of haunted marshland. Thankfully, the makers of Manga's ultra-spooky new drama, *The Kingdom*, have ignored this advice and given us a five-part, soon-to-be-cult series that sits somewhere between *The X-Files* and *ER*. Ghost-driven ambulances, disembodied sobbing in the lift shaft, hacksaw-wielding doctors in love... It's all bonkers stuff for sure, so feel free to zap over to the Manga site for more details and to use the recently-revamped chatspace to discuss what's going on in the labyrinths of *The Kingdom*. Clip-wise, there are two kooky sequences featuring masonic salutes, barmy noises and a game of tag-team brain rolling.

The Chemical Brothers

What do you get when you cross Scary Spice with that one out of *Skunk Anansie?* Answer: here.

http://raft.vmg.co.uk/chemicalbros

Ed and Tom are back with a bang. With their recent album 'Dig Your Own Hole' currently combusting boom boxes on a street corner near you, there's no better time to check out the continuing adventures of *The Chems*, via Virgin's Raft site. On-line, there's the first part of a suitably bugged-out cartoon strip to accompany their chart-topping single, plus loads more Chemical madness. There's also a full revamp on the cards, and with last year's stomach-emptying virtual roller coaster in mind, it's guaranteed to be dizzying in the extreme. In the meantime, watch this video clip and try your hardest not to rant along.

Gillian Anderson

BSkyB

Woman meets robot. Woman likes robot. Woman sings song about liking robot.

http://vmg.co.uk

Agent Scully in trip-hop shocker! Taking a break from chasing after weird stuff and raising the temperature in the bedrooms of teenage males across the country, Gillian Anderson has decided to put voice to vinyl. 'Extremis' is the name of the track, and sees her whispering and groaning over the spaced-out, space age grooves of techno tribe, *HAL*. Pouty vocals, spooky music and a couple of sexy people who turn into robots, the truth might not be in here but some strange music most definitely is. And what about those subliminal flea images? Mulder? Heeeelllpp...

The Orb

GP

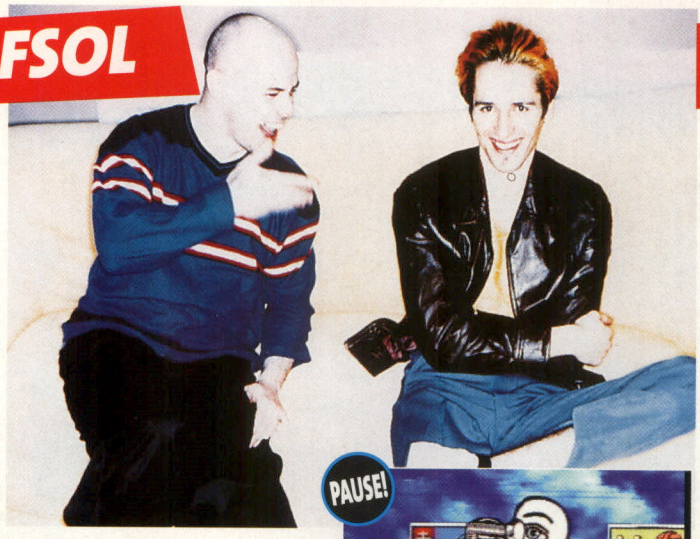
A nice video subplot involving Biggles leading a national chimney sweep revolt.

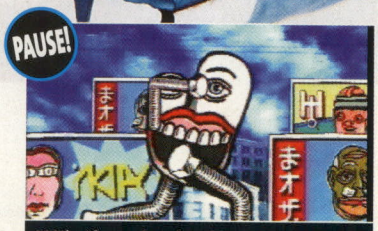
http://www.orblivion.co.uk/

Just when you thought it was safe to go into the Chill Out "Lounge", that original chemical brother, Dr Alex Patterson, is back with his new cohort, Andy Hughes. The result is the lush techno climes of their latest album, 'Orblivion'. The new single, 'Asylum', is an ambient tranceathon of the highest order and, as you'll see on the CD, gets the video it deserves. Visit the Orblivion site for the full story behind their return and a clip from their last Top Five smash 'Toxygene'. Best of all, on June 1, there's a Net-only preview of four new tracks. Net cooler than the real world? Oh yes.

Music

FSOL





FSOL's vid screeches along like Disney on amyl. To check out each subliminal detail, switch to slo-mo.

http://raft.vmg.co.uk/fsol

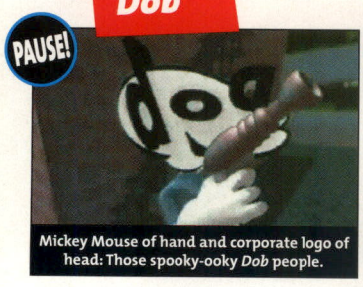
In between launching their new label (EBV) and performing ISDN gigs up and down the land, the proto-ambient techno pairing of *Future Sound Of London* can still be found floating around the Net in The Raft's Electronic Brain section. 'We Have Explosive' was featured on the 'Wipeout 2097' album and has been given a suitably block rockin' makeover for its single release. Just watch this brain-mangling animated clip for proof.

Radiohead

http://www.radiohead.co.uk

You can hear the forthcoming *Radiohead* album, 'OK Computer', before anyone else! How? First off you need some software called BackWeb. Luckily, with the aid of House Of Blues, Parlophone and BackWeb, we've slapped it on this CD. Once it's installed on your computer, you just have to subscribe to the channel you want and wait as FREE info down-loads on to your hard drive. According to BackWeb, you can get "multimedia presentations, fun animations/cartoons, and/or audio announcements". Sound good? It'll sound even better when you consider that *Radiohead* will be using BackWeb to send out visuals and sound samples of their new album.

Dob



Mickey Mouse of hand and corporate logo of head: Those spooky-ooky *Dob* people.

http://www.inx.de/lhi/

If there's one thing a CD-ROM needs, it's surely a nice healthy dose of Japanese space-age, easy-listening muzak. Hailing from Fukuoka in the south of Japan, *Dob's* debut LP 'La Lu La Roo' makes for a banquet of interactivity.

Visit the site and you can mix tunes from the album, saunter around the band's imaginary planet and generally behave like an android on heat. The beautifully-animated video for their latest single, 'Planet Dob' (shown on this here CD), enables you to take a peek into *Dob's* wonderfully cool but utterly bizarre world. Afterwards, you might like to link back to the brand new Bungalow Records site. Bungalow is cyberhome to all sorts of muso madness *(Hammond Inferno,* anyone?) and where *Dob* makes its Western home from home. Don't forget your passport.

Can

It's the man. The man from *Can*. The man from *Can* with skin like spam.

http://www.mutelibtech.com/mute/can/can.htm

"Can will be remembered as one of the great 20th century bands. Every one of *Can's* members is a hero, and a true star." Thus spake archdrude Julian Cope, and he's spot on.

Having just unleashed 'Sacrilege' (a two-CD collection of *Can* remixes from the likes of *Sonic Youth, A Guy Called Gerald, The Orb* and *U.N.K.L.E.), Can's* influential rumblings can be heard everywhere, from postrock to drum 'n' bass. As Mo Wax's James Lavelle explains in this clip, the German quartet is as pertinent today as it was back in the '70s.

All a tad over your head? If you want to gen up on just how influential these cats are, there's an in-depth biography to be found over at their Mute site with enough info to satiate even the most ardent Krautrock boffin.

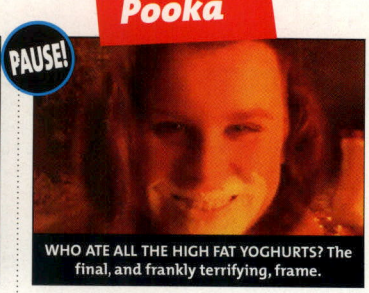
Salad

SMELL THE *ROSE?!* Worldwide, *Spinal Tap* fans fear for the rock purism of *Salad* woman.

http://www.island.co.uk/salad/

Fresh from their recent tour with *Babybird,* ex-MTV babe Marjine van der Vlugt and the *Salad* boys return to the indiebop fray with the suitably groovy 'Cardboy King'. The delightful story of those pervy phone cards, but with a swoonsome chorus to die for, visit *Salad's* Island Web site for exclusive snapshots and details of their fabby new album, 'Icecream'.

Pooka



WHO ATE ALL THE HIGH FAT YOGHURTS? The final, and frankly terrifying, frame.

http://www.island.co.uk/

Spooky indie folk madness in the area! Freshly signed to Island's Trade 2 offshoot and with a full Web site on the way, preview the female duo of Natasha Jones and Sharon Lewis with this wholesome slice of PJ Harvey-style pop from their summer LP. Bouncing around on a bed of glitter, pouring ice cream all over their faces... Just watch 'Mean Girl' and this clip description will all make sense. Kind of.

Along with all the clips, trailers and game demos, the *Connect* CD also has:

- **50 hours of free (but PC only) Web browsing with AOL. Simply go to Gizmos, click on 'AOL' and you'll be taken to a Windows set-up (Wizzard). Simply press install, and you're in! For access instructions, see the card inserted with the *Connect* CD. In case of installation problems, give AOL Tech Support a bell on (0800 279 7444).**
- **A stack of plug-ins, including RealAudio, RealVideo, Shockwave and Microsoft IE.**
- **100 Top Web sites, pre-bookmarked and ready for the clicking. Check out Net Dog's Essential Selection on page 67 to read our century of tip-top pages.**

Games

Interstate 76

http://www.activision.com/i76/

Relive those cheesy '70s TV shows in this *Starsky And Hutch*-style driving shoot 'em up. The demo gives you the chance to play one mission from the full game, encompassing bellbottoms, baffling lingo and cool toons. It also looks good, but at full detail you'll need a good PC (say, a P150) with Windows 95 and 32Mb of RAM.

The car's handling takes a bit of getting used to, but you'll find it easier with this selection of keys:

The numerical keypad or a joystick to accelerate, brake and steer.
[Tab] for reverse.
[Z] for emergency brake.
[Fullstop] and **[comma]** to change gears up and down.
The space bar or joystick button one to fire your weapon.
[Enter] or joystick button two to cycle through your weapons.
[G] for horn.
[H] for headlights.
[M] to view the map.

Hover Race

http://www.grokksoft.com/hover.html

Using your Net connection, you get to pilot a mini-hovercraft over obstacle-strewn tracks against up to seven other human opponents. Hang out in the obligatory chat rooms to either befriend or antagonise your peers, before launching into the race itself. All you need to do is zip around like a nutter and jump when appropriate – just don't get caught out by the distinct lack of friction and crash into walls. The controls are simple – cursors steer your hovercraft and **[ctrl]** fires your thrusters.

You can practise as a single player or go split screen against someone else, but best of all is competing against other people around the world. When you've installed the game, connect to the Net and click on the Hover Race icon in the Start menu. From the File menu, start an Internet game and let Hover Race connect to one of its servers. You should find plenty of worthwhile challengers.

Subspace

http://www.vie.com/subspace/

Charge around in open space and shoot down hundreds of other on-line players in this Asteroids-style game. To play, click on "Subspace" and the game automatically installs by default to c:\subspace. To check that your system's a high enough spec, double-click on the file subcheck.exe. Finally, to run the game double-click on subspace.exe.

Once the game starts, all you have to do is fly your little ship around several screens full of friendly and enemy ships, dodging the odd protruding lump of metal. Use the cursors to rotate and thrust, with **[ctrl]** firing cannons and **[tab]** firing bombs. If you want to play an off-line practice game before taking on the world, a handy little tutorial explains all the power-ups as you collect them.

We had no price details when we went to press, but hopefully you won't be charged too much. And if you are? Then keep practising with this CD version.

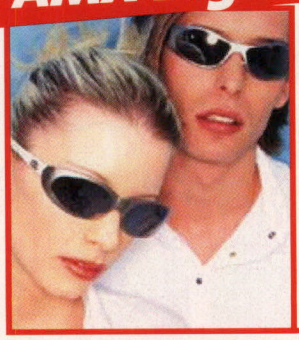
Meridian 59

http://meridian.3do.com

This multi-player, on-line-only game takes place in a mythical world of dungeons and dragons. An enormous land populated by hundreds of people from around the world, the various missions you'll embark on will involve anything from increasing your skill and earning money to just popping down the tavern for a bit of a chinwag.

Your first month of play is free, but it will cost you around £6.50 per month from then on. You also need to have a 32-bit connection to the Internet. Once you've installed the game through the *Connect* CD menu, start up your Net connection and click on the Meridian 59 entry. The game will connect to 3DO's server in the US, where you can sign up as a new player. To play, use the cursor keys to move, your mouse to select other items on screen, such as weapons, and click on the text box at the bottom to type commands and chat to other characters.

AMX Digital



http://www.fabrislane.co.uk/

Taken a look at the *Connect* CD-ROM yet? Then do so now, 'cos there's a preview of the ace new Fabris Lane home page **(http://www.fabrislane.co.uk)** just waiting to be clicked on. Coded up by AMXDigital, you can ogle the latest sunglasses from the UK's leading brand. Add on a Web site that's currently up for a 1997 Yell Web Award and how could we resist? We've hooked up with AMXDigital and Fabris Lane to offer 50 pairs from their range – 25 for the boys and 25 for the girls. Given that these babies usually cost around £50, it doesn't take much to realise that this is a prize of considerable generosity.

Naturally, to win such desirable booty, the question is going to be rather taxing – unless you check out their section of the CD, that is. Head over to the Fabris Lane showcase, take a gander round its Shockwaved corridors and you'll find the answer to the following question:

The Question:

What infamous anti-depressant is featured on the Fabris Lane Contact page?

WIN!

HAVE SOME RULES

1. E-mail your answer to **compo.connect@futurenet.co.uk**, with the headline "Fabris Lane Compo". Please specify whether you want boy's or girl's glasses.
2. Multiple mails? Not allowed.
3. Employees of Future Publishing, AMXDigital and Fabris Lane may not enter.
4. All entries must be received by July 1st, 1997.
5. Winners will be painstakingly drawn from a cardboard box currently on top of the bookcase behind us. You get the right answer and you're in with a chance. The editor's decision is, inevitably, final.

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NEW TO

the Brain...

The latest hits and random arrivals pumped fresh from The Brain.

Use The Philishave

Unlike the rest of the universe, The Brain has never been one for this *Star Wars* lark. He's therefore duly chuffed to announce The Shaven Wookie Web Page (http://funnelweb.utcc.utk.edu/~crhawkns/wookie.html), a site dedicated to introducing Mr Chewbacca to Mr Immac. Silly, you say? Well, of course it is, but what a simply divine idea...

The Mark Of A Man

The Brain has but one rule when it comes to choosing clothes: if Marilyn Monroe wore 'em, then so does he. That means heading over to the Lee Jeans home page (http://www.Leejeans-world.com/), a Shockwaved cybershop not only to Mazza's preferred denim trousers, but also "dudes" by the name of Professor Cool and DJ De La Sexy. "Boo boop be doop," indeed.

Mother's Ruin

"Ice and a slice, my lover!" is one of The Brain's favourite phrases, so he's understandably pickled tink about Beefeater Gin's gorgeous home page (http://www. beefeatergin.co.uk/). Stumble around London Town's musical haunts, picking up on-line prizes all the way to Primrose Hill. All The Brain's ever picked up is a hangover and a nasty rash. Such is life.

Sweet Shop Avengers

It's all a bit Johnny Yank for this lump of grey matter, but those little "candy" treats with their decapitated-head-on-a-plastic-stick dispensers Pez have yet another on-line sweet shop. Pez.org (http://www.pez.org/) has the things spewing out of many a cartoon character's head. The inevitable countdown to the Ginger Spice dispenser starts here, but The Brain thinks he'll stick to his cough candy, thanks all the same.

Meanwhile...

It's with a "zap" and a "pow" that we announce the formation of the Disabled Comic Collectors' Club (http://www.airnet.net/kenj/dclub.html), an on-line clubhouse for those superhero buffs who unfortunately can't make it down to their local geek shop to buy the latest laminated copy of MutantGuy and ZapGirl.

Game Boy For A Laugh

Hands up anyone who remembers the Game & Watch (http://www.ot.se/lekrummet/g-w/welcome.html)? The Brain can, and Jorgan Lekrummet certainly does. So overwhelmed by the heady, um, pong of nostalgia is our surfing Swede, that he devotes those

the Brain

all seeing • all knowing • all news

Warner's latest blockbuster, *Batman And Robin*: "Did the speculation of early Net forums influence the final casting?"

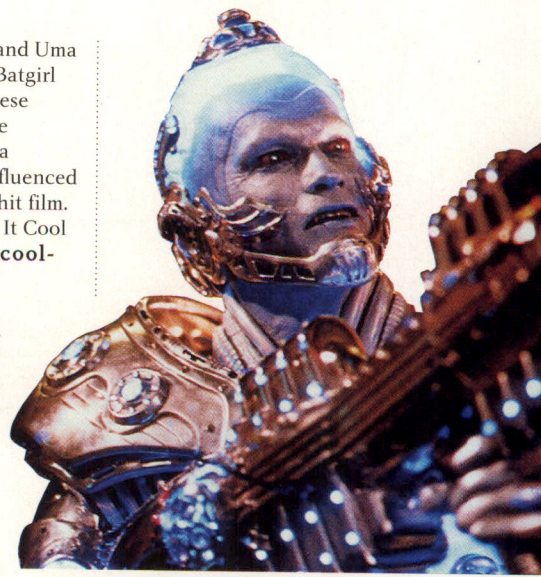
A DARK AND STORMY KNIGHT

With a month still to go until the UK premiere of the latest Bat-stravaganza, the Net's chocka with rumours, idol gossip and studio leaks. Remember: you didn't hear it here first...

In a few weeks' time, a film called *Batman Triumphant* will be playing in cinemas across the land. With David Duchovny assuming the Batmantle, watch as the Caped Crusader and Batgirl (played by *Melrose Place's* Alyssa Milano) take on the formidable pairing of Mr Freeze and Poison Ivy, portrayed by *Star Trek's* Patrick Stewart and Julia Roberts...

Rubbish? Indeed it is. *Batman And Robin* is the title of the summer blockbuster, our hero is played by *ER* beefcake George Clooney, Arnie is Mr Freeze and Alicia Silverstone and Uma Thurman get to ham it up as Batgirl and Poison Ivy. But despite these wrong turns, the Net has quite possibly been more than just a gossipmonger and actually influenced the casting of Warner's latest hit film.

Fanboy sites such as Ain't It Cool News **(http://www.aint-it-cool-news.com/)** and Corona Productions **(http://www.corona.bc.ca/films/intro.html)** have been posting rumours ever since the third Bat film's release in 1995.



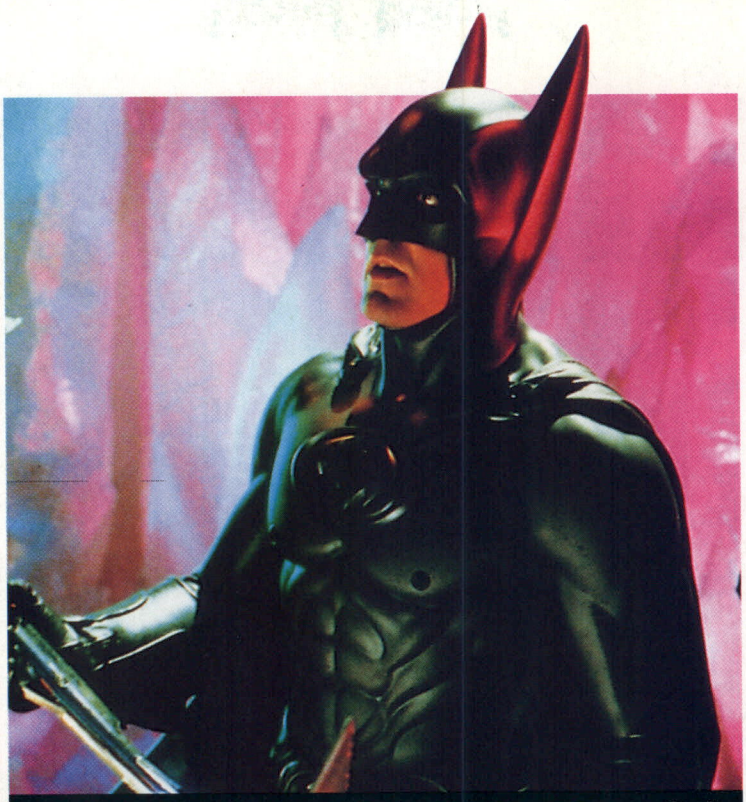
And it seems that when a comics Net forum ran a poll asking fans which villains they'd like to star in the fourth Batman movie, a bizarre chain reaction ensued. No sooner had people suggested Mr Freeze and Poison Ivy should go up against their hero, then film mags and Hollywood tabloid shows such as *Hard Copy* began to report mere idle speculation as hard fact. Julia Roberts was to play Poison Ivy or Batgirl, Demi Moore's name was bandied about and Joel Schumacher had virtually signed on the dotted line to direct the sequel.

It wasn't until February '96 that any real casting was confirmed. Clooney agreed to don the bat-suit in a three-picture deal worth $28 million, while Schwarzenegger, Thurman and Silverstone all put pen to paper. Exciting news for the Batfans, but did the speculation of those early Net forums influence Warner's final casting?

Some of the rumours posted to the Corona site come from people claiming to work in the movie industry. Could the relationship be two-way, with movie bosses using Net chats as a testing ground for potential characters? Unlikely, maybe, but there are uncanny similarities between that early forum and the villains eventually decided on. Who knows, the Net could be the place to go for movie news *before* it happens...

Away from these on-line Chinese whispers, Warner's treating the Web as a major part of its promotional campaign. The official site **(http://www.batman-robin.com)** has been up and running for some months now, offering trailers, storyboards and movie poster scans. The full site was launched mid May, and it looks set to equal the plan to turn Battersea Power Station into Gotham City for the UK premiere.

Inevitably, rumours about the next movie have already begun. Schumacher has signed a record-breaking $6.4 million dollar contract and US "shock jock" Howard Stern has reportedly been sounded out for the role of The Scarecrow. Other sites mention Jenny McCarthy, Mel Gibson and Robin Williams, with "leaked" villains ranging from the Mad Hatter to the Gentleman Ghost. All unconfirmed, of course, but come the film's projected release in 1999, it will be interesting to see who's up there on the screen. Keep 'em peeled.

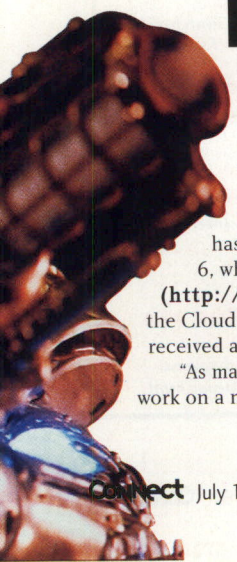


Batman Five: "Robin Williams, Jenny McCarthy and Mel Gibson already rumoured to play villians."

The Net could be the place to go for movie news *before* it happens...

RETURN OF THE JEDI!

Enough of these '70s gubbins! The new *Star Wars* films are what we want – and we want to know who's in 'em! Step forward the Web...



It was a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away... 20 years on and, although Lucas is still promoting the original *Star Wars* trilogy as heavily as possible, the masses are gagging to know what happens next – or, in this case, first.

The next wave of *Star Wars* films are actually prequels to the originals and the rumour mills have long been speculating over who are to play the young Darth Vader and Ben Kenobi. Lucas, however, has been offering no clues. Until, that is, May 6, when if you'd visited the official site **(http://www.starwars.com)** and signed up to the Cloud City "top secret" mailing list, you'd have received a pleasant surprise in your e-mailbox.

"As many of you know, George Lucas has begun work on a new trilogy of 'prequel' movies to precede the story told in the original *Star Wars* trilogy. While no deals have been completed, we are now in discussions with a number of actors and actresses..."

Which is where you'd expect most official movie press releases to end. For the Internet, however, Lucasfilm has made a slight exception.

"We are now in discussions with a number of actors and actresses – including Liam Neeson, Natalie Portman, and Ewan McGregor – to fill roles in the first movie of the new trilogy. In the coming weeks, you can expect to learn more about the prequel production by visiting **(http://www.starwars.com)**. We hope you share our excitement about this new chapter in the *Star Wars* saga!"

And with thoughts of Renton going up against Vader ("Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose the Force...") comes Lucas's provisional 1999 release schedule. All *Star Wars* trainspotters should head over to Cloud City **(http://bespin.starwars.com/)** to keep up to date.

NEW TO the Brain...

long Scandinavian nights to the archaic Game Boy. Ladies and gentleman, the Nintendo 64 has just left the building...

Jet Set Willy

Mountain bike, schmountain bike – the true gentleman's way to travel is the rocket belt... The imaginatively-titled Rocket Belt Dot Com (http://www.rocket-belt.com/) unveils the history of this most James Bond of trouser suspenders, from spluttering early test flights to the sleek future designs. The Brain does have a Christmas list, in case anyone's interested.

Drag Strip Artist

Aficionados of garage-punk rock such as The Brain will be pleased as punch to see that Satanic "rock" cartoonist Coop now has his own home page (http://www.d.umn.edu/~mperoces/). Removed from GeoCities a while back, come to his new hideout to meet devil girls, rebel boys and obscure American bands being eaten by robots. Charmed, I'm sure.

News Of The Virtual World

Spiffing to see Blighty having a go at this virtual world business with FortuneCity (http://www.fortunecity.com/). Designed by someone with a real film noir fetish, welcome to a shadowy borough where you can buy real estate, shop for CDs, chat with cybercitizens and puzzle over baroque mysteries before bedtime.

Meshes In The Afternoon

Frequently partial to the odd bit of celluloid angst, The Brain finds himself sternly slouched in the back row of Eurocinema's "Interactive Theater" (http://www.eurocinema.com). Avant-garde animation, postmodernist cinematography, stuff in black and white... All the fun of the fair – if you went to the fair in Prague around 1932, that is.

Life In The Slow Lane

Thanks to BBC On-line's Fantasy Formula One (http://ff1.topgear.com), The Brain is now fully genned up on all things Murray Walker. For £10, you can sign up, choose your driver, tweak your camshaft and that VIP trip to next year's Australian Grand Prix could be yours... The Brain says, "Up yours, Clarkson!". Ahem.

Pretty In Pink

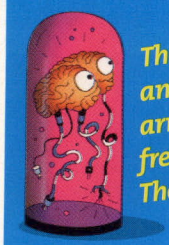
Interior decorating is a topic close to The Brain's disembodied heart, so why not skip daintily to Laura Ashley's most pastoral of home pages (http://www.laura-ashley.com)? Decorated with curtains, wallpaper, pretty dresses and voodoo dolls (only joking there), it's the perfect page to visit when you're feeling just... Lovely.

Amber Gambling

Turn your monitor into a virtual Earl's Court with the aid of the new Fosters on-line brewery (http://www.fostersbeer.com). Chat to fellow boozers, grab yourself a "tinny" and learn to

NEW TO

the Brain...



The latest hits and random arrivals pumped fresh from The Brain.

speak fluent Australianese. "Old cheese" means "mother", but there's still no translation for, "Tickle it, you wrigglers". Thank God.

The South Will Rise Again

Hardly the most timely of home pages, but possibly the most evocative, it's with great pride that The Brain can announce the return of The Dukes Of Hazzard (http://www.cbs.com/may/hazzard.html). Bo, Duke, Daisy and, most importantly, the General Lee are back, and while Boss Hogg may have headed off to the great pie shop in the sky, his lard-arsed spirit lives on-line. Yee-haw, as it were.

Supermodel Superficial

What good, The Brain ponders, are supermodels if you can't mangle their soulless faces beyond recognition with the aid of Net trickery and an evil heart? Thankfully, Distortions (http://www.ibsnet.com/ndl/distortions) agrees heartily and is using its multimedia magic to warp Naomi, Cindy and Claudia into so much animated plasticine.

Dharma Bums

And when you just can't wait for that curious picture of Gillian Anderson to down-load, why not make like The Brain and head over to that "buddha coffeehouse", Bohemian Ink (http://www.levity.com/corduroy/index.htm)? Get nostalgic over dead Beats, Messrs Ginsberg and Keroauc, and down-load free fonts from rock stars you've never heard of. Hmm.

A Question Of Faith

Although more famous these days for her lookalike Nunbun (http://www.qecmedia.com/nunbun/index.html), Mother "Still Kicking" Teresa has a new home on the Net for her book, *No Greater Love* (http://www.mother-teresa.com). Much ancient wisdom on love, forgiveness, poverty and "being holy", The Brain is truly a humbler organ for typing in this URL.

European Sun

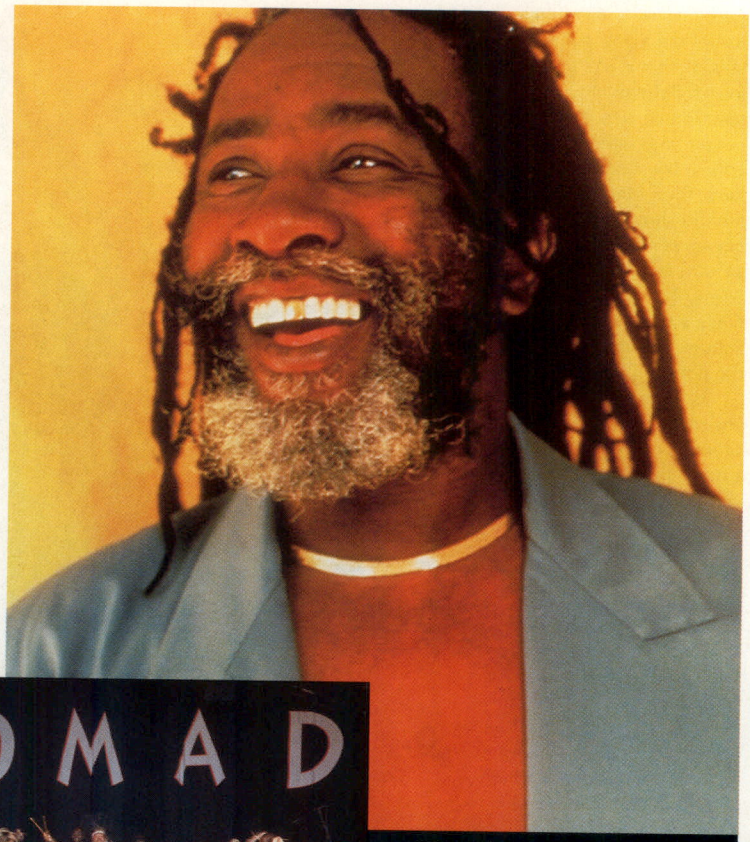
"The world's first complete newspaper on-line" is indeed a lofty claim, but with the techno-magic of Adobe Acrobat, *The European* (http://www.the-european.com) is all present and beautifully correct. French current affairs, Italian soccer, the latest gigs for Belgium... The Brain slaps his ECUs on the counter and says, "C'est trés swanky, madam".

Star-Spangled Banner Ad

For some, Woodstock was "the battlefield where love won", as opposed

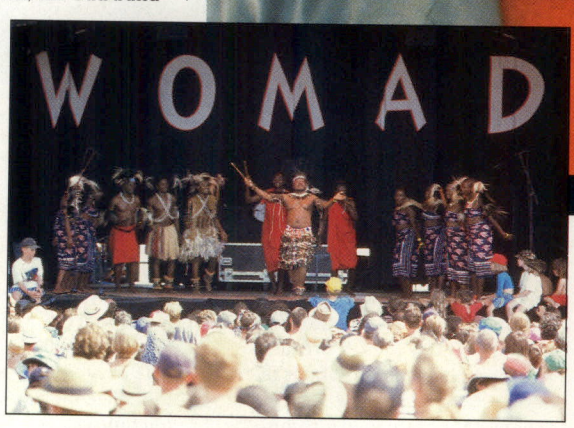
WOMAD FOR IT!

Mung bean vibeage in the area! WOMAD – the summer's most cultured music festival – sets up its teepee on the Internet. *Connect* checks out this year's line-up.



WOMAD: "Far from a normal Webcast."

For most, the summer festival means three days of potential monsoon, toilet facilities beyond your worst nightmare and, when you can be bothered to emerge from your tent, the odd band or two. But it doesn't have to be like that.



Imagine a festival where the stages are covered, the vibes are karmic and jugglers unicycle around 24 hours a day dispensing free Zen and beanburgers... Maybe. Yes, it's WOMAD time again and, while the line-up of artists so far is in keeping with the world music that WOMAD's supported since 1983, this year they've decided to launch a Web site in honour of the occasion **(http://realworld.on.net/womad).**

As anyone who hooked up to last year's Phoenix site is well aware **(http://www.goodcleanfun.freud.co.uk/),** the concept of putting a festival on-line isn't exactly new. The WOMAD page, however, is a far from normal Webcast. Narrowly losing out to WEA's Perfecto dance music site **(http://www.perfecto.co.uk/)** in last month's Music Week Awards for Best Web Site Design **(http://www.dotmusic.com/awardsmenu.html),** the WOMAD site promotes not only its worldwide range of festivals, but the organisation and its concerns. Find out all about the WOMAD foundation and its aims to, "promote, maintain, improve and advance education in world cultures and multi-cultural education", take in the state-of-the-art Radio Real World, and join in a chat forum where you can discuss any and all of the issues raised.

Of course, it doesn't hurt that all this worthiness looks absolutely gorgeous, but beyond such HTML righteousness, there are still events to be promoted and funds to be raised. As well as selling CDs of the performing artists (backed up, of course, with Shockwave audio samples), WOMAD is packed with the latest details of July's festival at Rivermead, Reading. The line-up is still to be completed, but the bands confirmed so far include *Burning Spear, Faithless,* Mad Professor (best known for his *Massive Attack* remix), Ravi Shankar and, for the first time, the World Of Beats from those infamous rave merchants, *MegaDog.* Oh, and *The Javanese Puppeteers...*

Groovy stuff, to be sure – and the estimated 17,000 happy campers who are going to be frugging their trousers off from 25 to 27 July undoubtedly agree. *Connect* will keep you informed as to how the Web site's covering the event.

Net Freebies

Type in the URL, fill in the form, and hang around your letterbox... Getting something for nothing has never been so easy.

FREE RS Rolls Cigarette Papers
http://rsrolls.com/sample.HTM

FREE Quik Floss dental floss
http://www2.southwind.net/~fni/floss5.html

FREE Pepcid AC
http://www.jnj-merck.com/L2/Comments/index.html

FREE Power Rangers fishing toy
http://www.zebco.com/quiz.html

FREE King Of Shaves shaving oil
http://www.shave.com/

Free Simply Whispers earrings
http://www.simplywhispers.com/html/catreq.html

Free stick of Port80 rock
http://www.port80.com/free/

FREE stuff from the Swatch Club
http://www. swatch-art.com/cclub/ccform.htm

FREE Cansorb cat litter
http://www.cansorb.com/promo.htm

FREE Snowboarding On-line stickers
http://snow.interzine.com/solsurvey/regsurvey.htm

Free Map West map of San Francisco
http://www.mapwest.com/forms/order.html

RS Fag Papers: "FREE!"

LOONEY TUNES

MTV-censored animaniac transports Ren & Stimpy madness on-line. With special guest star, Bjørk.

Unless you're a hardcore cartoon freak, the names Jimmy the Idiot Boy and George Liquor won't mean much. A plasticine-faced geek and an all-American fascist, they're better known as the owners of Ren and Stimpy – two of the most psychotic cartoon animals ever to grace a TV screen. A massive hit both financially and with the critics, studio censorship by the show's broadcasters Nickelodeon forced their creator John Kricfalusi to abandon his doomed pet projects back in 1992. In Kricfalusi's hunt for a medium where his then-ailing company Spumco could show their wares uncut, he inevitably stumbled upon the Web.

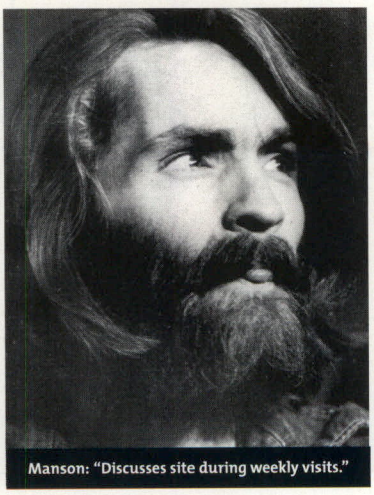
Spumco's Web site **(http://www.spumco.com/)** is a gag-a-second blend of exclusivity and corporate soft sell where you can read Net-only strips, down-load rare sketches and animations, and hopefully buy the talking Idiot Boy doll. It's also the only place where you can see the original Spumco-developed video for Bjørk's 'I Miss You'. It seems that some broadcasters took exception to the scene where the Icelandic pixie's breasts are covered with giant condoms inside which dance miniature versions of Jimmy the Idiot Boy and Bjørk herself. Despite being more saucy than erotic, the offending scene was banned and Kricfalusi was censored anew.

Bjørk & Idiot Boy: "Full unexpurgated video on-line."

But, as the man himself says, "Spumco fans know that rubber nipples aren't dirty at all". Powered by RealVideo, the full, unexpurgated 'I Miss You' is now available to view on-line **(http://www.spumco.com/bjork.html)**. A treat for Webbed-up Bjork obsessives, it's the latest on-line victory for Kricfalusi, and proves that the Net beats the real world hands down when it comes to letting the viewer decide.

HELTER SKELTER!

Charles Manson gets an almost-official Web site...



Archive Photos

Manson: "Discusses site during weekly visits."

From his home in California, George Stimson and his partner Sandra Good maintain a small Web site. With just a smattering of text and the odd picture, to call it modest would be kind; to call it rubbish, more accurate. But, unlike other similarly impoverished home pages, Stimson and Good's site gets more than its fair share of Net traffic. Why? Because they live only 20 miles from Corcoran State Prison – the permanent home of their friend and guru, and the subject of their home page, Access Manson **(http://www.atwa.com/)**.

Only recently, Charles Manson told his parole board that he was "working on" a Web site. Access Manson is the closest Manson's got to the outside world since 1969, when he was imprisoned in connection with the Tate-LaBianca murders. While he doesn't contribute directly, according to Wired News he discusses the site during Stimson's weekly visits.

Serial killer and cult-related home pages are no stranger to the Web and Manson has several shrines dedicated to his activities. While Stimson's visits to Manson aren't enough to bestow an official status on their page, his partner Sandra Good was an original member of Manson's infamous Family cult. Thankfully, Access Manson is possibly the least impressive of these homage pages and should therefore keep visitors to a minimum.

NEW TO the Brain...

to a sartorial wasteland where that Hendrix bloke played feedback for a few million undesirables. Abigail "Here For You" Storm certainly believes the former, and her wholesome Woodstock Nation (http://www.woodstocknation.org) is truly dedicated to keeping the spirit of the lentil alive. Peace – I'm out of here...

Prance, Prance, Wherever You May Be...

Michael Ball in a tutu, otherwise known as that Riverdance traitor and Housewives' Choice Michael Flatley, has his own lithe page for Lord Of The Dance (http://www.lordofthedance.com). Look at the photos, buy the "limited edition lithograph" or, for a giggle, read the guest book. "Your dancing ignites my Irish soul!" claims Pamela Allen of Arcata, California.

Girls And Boys

Before Mrs Brain came along, your cerebral host was a bit of a one for the ladies. With Club 18–30's cheeky on-line travel brochure (http://www.club18-30.co.uk/), he can finally relive the days of his scurrilous youth. Resorts as wide-ranging as Florida and Ibiza are but a click away – as are charming close-ups of what young people today refer to as "six-packs" and "lady bumps".

Eight Miles High

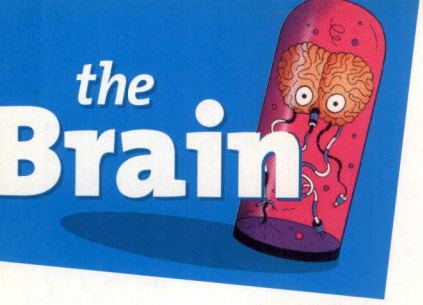
Apart from seeing how many miniatures you can procure, the first thing to do as a jetsetter is to join that most legendary of organisations, the Mile High Club (http://www.milehighclub.com/). At last, those torrid tales of toilet-related tawdriness are on-line. Peruse salacious confessions of much mid-air hanky panky, all of which the Brain can attest are true. Honest. No, really, the Earth moved and everything...

Well Weird Shit

More *Fortean Times* than *Wigan Evening Chronicle*, the San Francisco Examiner's Bondage Files (http://www.sfgate.com/examiner/bondage/) will confirm all your preconceptions about those Yanks. The Brain now knows for sure that America's West Coast is riddled with people impaling their heads on car aerials, ripping their hands off in tug-of-war contests or just allowing hummingbirds to nest in their hair. As that time-proven cliché goes, "Only in America"...

Dounble O Heaven

The Cold War might be over, but the thawing process is unveiling some *Boy's Own* tricks of the dirty games that went on. Extracted from *The Encyclopedia Of Espionage*, Spy Fact Of The Day (http://www.randomhouse.com/spybook/) soon had The Brain breaking into foreign embassies before enjoying a pleasant brunch of cyanide pills. Top secret? The Brain has seen all this before on *The New Avengers* and got Honor Blackman thrown in to (kinky) boot.



POD AND CHIPS TWICE

"Amorphous cyberdance collective" – a robotic two fingers up to Britpop or just The Future Sound Of Comedy? Welcome to *The Pod*.

The Pod: "Beautiful sexless tomorrow children."

"Originally, *The Pod* was just a trapeze act that was on the Net. And then we said, what about a bit of techno? Anyone can join *The Pod*. You just have to bring yourself."

Dance music for the next millennium, *The Pod* is here to bring multimedia guffaws and techno squiggly noises to your desktop. Imagine *Orbital* doing a stand-up routine at the Edinburgh Festival, toss in a smidge of *Spinal Tap* and then add a gag about ISDN lines and you're still nowhere near describing *The Pod*.

"It's a kind of future-thought nexus. It's not just dance technique; it's about spreading information, promoting the future as the only way forward for mankind."

Surrealist monologues should pose no problem, considering the lycra-clad duo's track record. *Pod* Number One, Julian Barratt, has worked with the likes of Harry Hill and won the BBC's Open Mic Award in 1995. His partner, Tim Hope, headlined the 1995 Comedy Stage at Glastonbury.

But this is 1997 and the Net is where it's at. *The Pod* twosome inevitably have their own opinion.

"We're trying to make the Internet illegal, so we get banned. I mean, that's the only way people are going to listen. We use the words of garage, disco – that kind of sex and genital-obsessed lyrics. We reappropriate the language. If we say, 'We'll be doing it all night!' that means we'll be having a late-night conferencing session on the Web."

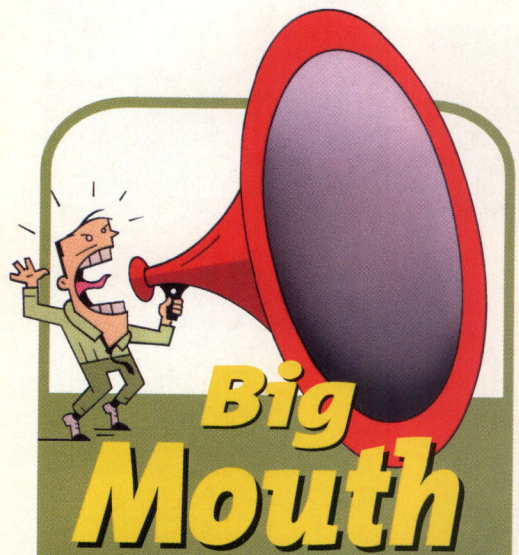
Is the great British public ready for such techno-shenanigans? The BBC thinks so and is currently developing shows with *The Pod*. But surely this is blasphemy? The Web is where they should be. Indeed, if you head over to their "info-nexus" **(http://alt.venus.co.uk/thepod/)**, you'll find loads of info and some rather interesting poetry...

But have they ever got anything worthwhile out of this Internet business?

"I once had a sexual relationship on the Net. The beauty of it was, I didn't know whether it was a man or a woman... Then I found out it was my dad."

Chilling stuff. With the "success" of their recent Net-only illegal rave ("We got a farmer to lend us his Web site. Can't tell you the address yet. Meeting at the Little Chef home page on the M25, 11pm."), the future shines bright for *The Pod* – and they want you to be involved.

"The only real instrument is the human mind. That's where all music comes from. That and an Akai MIDI-4 Skuzkip..."



Alt dot what and alt dot when? *Connect* predicts a month of decent discussion in the following newsgroups...

Ah, sweet June. 30 days of lazing under the sweet rays of Mother Sun and, of course, chatting to Mr Zach Q Thwackenheimer III of Ohio about what's tickled your fancy this month. Which means motorbikes or, more specifically, the TT Races (31 May to 6 June). The leatherclad bods at rec.motorcycles.racing and alt.motorcycle.sportbike will undoubtedly be talking complete and utter pedals, but if four wheels are more your thing, vent your spleen about this month's Canadian (15 June) and French (29 June) Grand Prix at rec.autos.sport.f1.

With England, Italy, Brazil and France all playing, the Umbro Football Tournament (3 to 11 June) will provoke much Euro '97-ness over at alt.sports.soccer.european.uk and rec.sport.soccer. Cricket enthusiasts can saunter over to rec.sport.cricket.info for scores and stats or rec.sport.cricket for a chinwag about the First Test of the Ashes (5 to 9 June). But if you prefer a racier lifestyle, compare hat stories from this month's Royal Ascot (17 to 20 June) and Derby days (7 June) over at uk.sport.horseracing. Or perhaps rec.gambling.racing would be more appropriate...

June is also the month of the "summer blockbuster". Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element*, released in the UK on 15 June, will be much frothed over at alt.movies.visual-effects and alt.fan.gary-oldman. Or, if you prefer to Batchat about your fave Bat hero or Bat villain, Bathead over to alt.fan.george-clooney, alt.fan.alicia-slvrstone, alt.fan.schwarzenegger or alt.comics.batman.

Of course, summer means Glastonbury (28 to 29 June). The organisers haven't confirmed any acts, but we suspect healthy hit rates for alt.music.blur, alt.music.prodigy-the, alt.music.smash-pumpkins and alt.music.underworld. And rec.sport.unicycling. And don't forget to troop the colour for the Queen's birthday on June 14 at alt.talk.royalty.

What else, then? Probably much howling at the full moon on 20 June at alt.werewolves. And both alt.galactic-guide and alt.paranet.science are set to go bonkers as the Hale Bopp comet "goes" 3.5-degrees from Comet Encke on 15 June. Or indulge in rune-related rapping about the summer solstice (21 June) at alt.religion.druid and soc.religion.paganism. Wear your best cloak.

Patrick Regout

CELEBRITY SOUNDALIKES #1

Random e-mails to those unfortunates who've been lumbered with a name uncannily similar to a showbiz celebrity. This month: not *the* Hugh Grant but still, in a very real sense, Hugh Grant.

How are you doing, old boy?
Fine, fine...
So how old are you, if you don't mind us asking? And what's your occupation?
I'm a 30-something (and holding) university professor.
Your favourite movie?
Philadelphia Story (with Cary Grant).
Your favourite Hugh Grant movie?
Oh God... Was he in *Remains Of The Day?* Yes? *Remains Of The Day*, then.
Your worst Hugh Grant movie?
The list is steadily growing. But that Hollywood one where he got upstaged by a baby was pretty awful. *Nine Months*.
Do you get e-mails from people wanting to talk to you about Elizabeth Hurley?
Not counting this e-mail? Oh, I've probably only had about three since my time on the Net. Certainly not enough to make me change my e-mail address.
If you met your soundalike, what would you ask him?
Not much. The only aspect of his fame that I appreciate is that non-Anglos can now spell my name properly (instead of Hew or Hue). Some even take me for a former UN secretary (U Thant). Before that there was an American TV character named Lou Grant starring Ed Asner. Going from being confused for a short, fat bald guy to Mr English upper-class crumpet is obviously a step up.
Apart from your name, do you have a claim to fame?
Afraid not.
And, finally, what's the most common reaction from folks when they hear your name?
Usually childish giggles and confused musings about oral sex and LA hookers.

Hugh Grant (grant@UWinnipeg.ca), thank you very much.

Kobal Collection

TON UP!

She's mad! She's bad! She's 122 years old! And she's gone and bought a modem!

In these days of on-line births, deaths and marriages, the fact that Jeanne Calment recently celebrated her birthday on the Internet is hardly newsworthy. But when you consider that Ms Calment is currently blind, almost deaf and confined to a wheelchair, the event suddenly seems rather more impressive. And when you then learn that she's currently the oldest person in the world with a staggering 122 years on her body clock...

Born in Arles, France, in 1875, cybercentenarian Jeanne is no stranger to the bizarre birthday bash. Last year, she celebrated her continued survival by releasing 'Maitresse Du Temps', a rap record where she recalled events such as meeting Vincent Van Gogh, over a hip-hop beat. With the aid of the IPSEN Foundation, Jeanne's 122nd birthday was captured on-line and her Web site **(http://www.imaginet.fr/~webadmin/jeanne-calment/jeanne/frHP.html)** remains a shrine to a woman whose heart, it's been estimated, has beaten over four million times.

What of next year? There are no plans at present. Indeed, if you believe the on-line "death pool" of spoof gamblers at The Eights Society **(http://www.crl.com/~rfboggs/ace8/aceeight.html)**, certain factions of the Net don't hold out much hope of Jeanne's reaching 123. But, given Jeanne's ox-like constitution and the fact that she only recently gave up smoking, putting money on such a pessimistic prediction is perhap unwise. The preparations for the world's first on-line tea dance start here, and the final words should surely go to Jeanne herself: "I've only got one wrinkle and I'm sitting on it." Respect.

Jeanne Calment: "Recently released a rap record."

Web Rings *Round and round and round they go...*

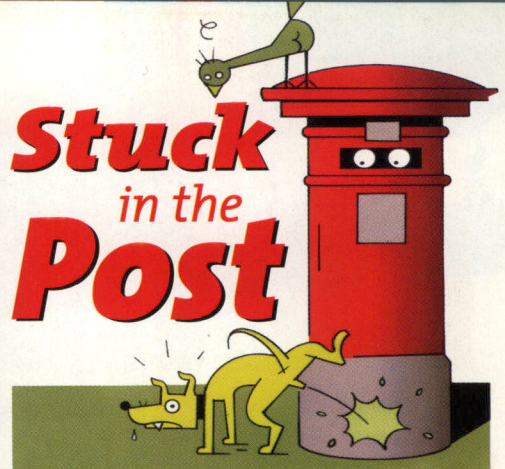
#1 Bruce Campbell

1. http://inetport.com/~spannaus/army.htm
2. http://members.aol.com/simivlygrl/bc.htm
3. http://www.pixi.com/~zelmak/bruce/index.html
4. http://www.missouri.edu/~c698964/bruce.htm
5. http://www.bcgazette.com/
6. http://www.europa.com/~rew1977/dead/dead.htm

Web Rings *Round and round they go again...*

#2 Drew Barrymore

1. http://www.reach.net/~weese/index.htm
2. http://www.wfu.edu/~david/drew/
3. http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hills/6450/drew.html
4. http://www.cbn.net.id/users/urdi/drew.htm
5. http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/4232/drew.htm
6. http://www.acm.ndsu.nodak.edu/~sharalds/drew.html



A round-up of the latest mailing lists coming to a cyberpostbox near you.

Ovi's World Of The Bizarre

From Israeli OAP skag dealers to America's infant bank robbers, donkey molesting to evil chocolate, take a detour from the middle-of-the-road world of current affairs with cackling Ovi at the wheel. Always unpredictable and consistently delirious, this update of all things strange but true has us clutching our guts. Come: clutch with us.
Soundbite: "MOSCOW – a Russian blacksmith had been using an army canon shell as an anvil for the past ten years. That is, until it exploded and killed him. The *Komosomolskaya Pravda* newspaper reports that someone gave him the shell saying it did not contain any explosives..."
How often? Once a fortnight.
How to subscribe: Send a blank e-mail message to ovi-on@mail-list.com

UK Comedy Digest

A forum-style mailing list where anyone can add their gobsworth to the many-headed jackass that is British Comedy. Although most postings end up with a fence of exclamation marks and the tone veers more towards the fanny than the funny, they're an amicable enough bunch. Great for reviews of the hottest new comics on the stand-up circuit and stupid *Brass Eye* quotes. Not so great when the *Red Dwarf* lot spaz out on sci-fi.
Soundbite: "One last question, James. Why must you end every message with 'Fact me 'til I fart?'"
How often? Two to four times a week.
How to subscribe: Fill in the form on-line at http://www.comedyweb.co.uk

Whatever

At the time of writing, *Oasis* hasn't released a record for over a year, but it doesn't stop the members of this list gabbling Gallagher ten to the dozen. The good news is that the posters snub yawny B-sides swapsie chat for enjoyably inane Patsy gossip, spot-the-Liam compos and inside news on Noel's new album. The bad news is that so many fans are fighting for attention, you'll be interrupted by e-mails on an almost hourly basis.
Soundbite: "I've just heard 'It's Getting Better, Man'! And it is! Getting even better, that is."
How often? At least four messages a day.
How to subscribe: E-mail majordomo@kuci.uci.edu with "subscribe whatever" in the message body.

And how could we forget...

The Ferret Mailing List

Masochists with a passion for spiteful ratoid furbags will be delighted to hear that the ferret list has arrived. Shuffling up the wires and nipping at your mail box on a weekly basis, if you want to reminisce about Richard Whitely's infamous encounter with the satanic gnashers you know where to go. E-mail listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu with "subscribe FERRET firstname lastname" in the body of your message.

Jesse De Martino

the Brain

Net Events Diary

U2, Oasis, Supergrass, and, um, Tim Henman, headline in this month's preview of upcoming cybercasts and concerts.

GIG OF THE MONTH

King Eyebrow and Britpop overlord, Noel Gallagher, will be playing a 20-minute solo set on the first night of this year's Tibetan Freedom Concert **(http://www.sonicnet.com/tibet/)**, along with dance-inflected paddy-rockers, *U2*.

SonicNet is doing the on-line honours again, broadcasting the entire two-day concert over the Net on 7 and 8 June. Special guests are still to be announced, but with Michael Stipe, Bjørk, *Blur* and *Beastie Boys* on the bill, a good time is assured. See the SonicNet or Milarepa sites **(http://www.milarepa.org)** for full details.

7 June: *Sonic Youth/Foo Fighters/Jon Spencer Blues Explosion*/Noel Gallagher

8 June: Bjørk/*De La Soul*/Lee Perry/Michael Stipe and Mike Mills/*Pavement/Radiohead/Blur/Beastie Boys*/Alanis Morissette/*U2*

Gallagher, Stipe and *Blur*: "On-line and on the bill with *U2*."

JUNE 1ST You'll have to be quick, but 1 June sees the exclusive Net premiere of four new tracks by *The Orb* at the new Orblivion Web site **(http://www.orblivion.com/)**. Streamed in RealAudio, none of the tracks have been released yet and are guaranteed to put you in that little fluffy clouds mood.

JUNE 3RD With a new album and Web site **(http://www.theprodigy.co.uk/)** on the way, it's no surprise that *The Prodigy* is booked to play at Irving Plaza **(http://www.irvingplaza.com)** on 3 June. Real-world tickets for the New York gig sold out yonks ago, but you can catch the firestarters live on-line.

JUNE 4TH If you're old and cultured enough to remember the original *The Nutty Professor*, catch Jerry Lewis live in the Adelphi Theatre production of *Damn Yankees* **(http://www.buybroadway.com/shows/damn-yankees/index.htm)**. The show's being Webcast on its opening night (4 June, 8pm GMT), so check it out and find out who Jim Carrey nicked the funny face routine from.

JUNE 8TH Cliff knows why, but Wimbledon sells out every year. If you don't have a ticket, saunter on over to AOL (keyword: Wimbledon) for on-line forums with the likes of Tim Henman and Steffi Graf, video and audio clips, snapshots of the day's play and possibly a "strawberries and cream" pun or seven. As with last year's tournament, there's also an IBM site in the works, but AOL starts serving on 8 June and keeps going till 5 July. If it doesn't rain.

JUNE 15TH Fancy the new *Radiohead* platter but not convinced by that "challenging" new single? Click on the estimable LiveConcerts **(http://liveconcerts.com)** on 15 June to listen to the forthcoming album, 'OK Computer', in *RealAudio*. Two broadcasts have been planned (one for America, one for Europe), so check that site for details.

JUNE 20TH All unapologetic grungers should visit AudioNet on 20 June for the Blockbuster Rockfest **(http://www.audionet.com/concerts/rockfest97/)**. Feast your lobes on a bevvy of black-clad bands, including *Bush, No Doubt, Counting Crows, The Wallflowers, Collective Soul, Jewel,* Paula Cole, and *Matchbox 20. Matchbox 20?*

JUNE 20TH For the X-O-philes "out there", 20 to 23 June sees the on-line launch of Roswell '97 **(http://www.roswell.co.uk/)**, a Real Media live Webcast from Earl's Court in London to mark the 50th anniversary of the Roswell Incident. If you can make it up to the big smoke, there are tantalising promises of laser displays, fireworks and live music to celebrate the alleged UFO crash-landing back in July 1947. If you can't be there, bookmark this site now and watch anorak history in the making. Continues until 23rd June.

JUNE 26TH Denmark's Roskilde Festival (26 to 29 June) has almost reached its 90,000 capacity. Which isn't all that surprising, with the beatific trio of *Underworld, The Orb* and *The Prodigy* lined up, alongside *Beck, Cast, Kula Shaker* and *Suede*. Pop along to the official site **(http://www.roskilde-festival.dk/)** for full details and read up on how they intend to broadcast the gig on-line.

FUTURE EVENTS

June sees the full launch of *Supergrass's* Web site **(http://www.supergrass.com/)**, and the recent gig performed at the SXSW festival will be coming on-line in RealVideo format towards the end of the month. There's also a gig organised by cybercaster Irving Plaza **(http://www.irvingplaza.com/)** on 29 May. See the sites for further details.

Meanwhile, James Cameron's latest budgetbuster, *The Titanic*, starring Kate Winslet and Leonardo Di Caprio, will be getting one of those groovy MediaDome Webisodes **(http://www.mediadome.com/)** come late June. VivoActive technology enables you to watch the 110-foot model of The Titanic being built, while RealVR takes you on a quest for the secret behind the shipwreck. Keep an eye on the site for more info.

WHERE IT'S CHAT!

Fancy a chinwag with the stars? Here are the best of the on-line chat shacks starring famous types.

What? Oldsmobile Celebrity Circle
Where? AOL (keyword: Oldsmobile).
When? Monday to Friday, 5pm (10pm EST).
Who? Leonard Nimoy, John Cusack, Salma Hayek, Tim Roth, Danny Elfman and Ray Liotta have all stumbled through these eclectic car doors.

What? Warner/Reprise Records' CyberTalk
Where? AOL (keyword: CyberTalk).
When? Monday, 4.30pm (9.30pm EST).
Who? Previous chatters have included Lou Reed, *The Red Hot Chilli Peppers*, Seal and the MIGHTY Joan Jett.

What? MTV Arena
Where? http://mtv.com/
When? Every Tuesday, 3pm (8pm EST).
Who? Linked up to its AOL presence (see *Singled Out* every Tuesday at 3pm), MTV has recently "grilled" *INXS*, Jon Spencer, *The Cardigans* and Snoop "Doggy" Dogg. Woof.

What? Ch@tSoup
Where? http://www.chatsoup.com/
When? All the time. Honest.
Who? Everyone and anyone. Jay Leno, Tom Clancy, *No Doubt* and the cast of *Knot's Landing*.

What? SonicNet
Where? http://www.sonicnet.com
When? Intermittently, between 1pm and 2pm (6pm and 7pm EST).
Who? The latest chats include *Suede, Gene, Faithless* and *Brand New Heavies* with *Bis, The Charlatans* and *Radiohead* on the way.

What? House Of Blues
Where? http://www.hob.com
When? Intermittently, around 8.30pm GMT.
Who? Cyberhome to the first ever RealVideo chat with *Depeche Mode*, House Of Blues has recently given you the chance to swear at the likes of *The Fugees* and Tori Amos.

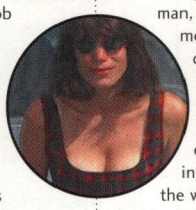
WEB SOAP UPDATE

Who's who, who's doing who and how they're doing it. By Steve "Soap" Merlin (Merlin200@earthlink.net).

101 HOLLYWOOD BLVD

http://101hollywood.com/index.htm

What's it about? A six-pack of young film makers who make small independent films with as much passion behind as in front of the cameras. There's also a bonafide noticeboard for anyone interested in a no-pay job working on movies.



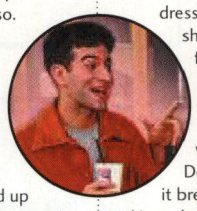
The main players: Brothers Austin and Healy are co-producers who make sibling rivalry look like an Olympic sport. Austin is in love with Wendy, while Healy's having trouble with Julia. Citizen Kane, the director, is in love with Rosebud, his French girlfriend. Alexis, the beautiful and conniving writer/producer just goes round causing trouble.

The plot so far: Rosebud needs to get married, or she'll be deported. She's loved Citizen Kane since before Xanadu, but he won't marry her – maybe Brian, the leading man, will... While filming in the mountains, Rosebud accidentally drives the truck off a cliff and Kane manages to catch it on film. Alexis is busy stealing men and scripts, although not necessarily in that order. Healy works as a ski instructor in Aspen Colorado during the winter and is trying to get money for his next film from his winter students. He's also discovered how to travel for free to raise cash to complete the movie.

SAN FRANCISCO BLEND

http://www.sfblend.com/intros/intro.html

What's it about? A small group of 20-somethings who drink gallons of coffee and make love in the city by the bay.



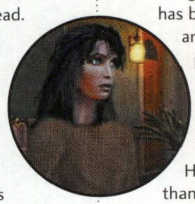
The main players: Charylu is a graphic designer who drinks double espresso. As soon as the caffeine hits her bloodstream, her eyes are wide open and looking for gossip – did she *really* see Bob kissing Jill the Amazon bitch from hell and marketing? God's gift to mankind, China does things for spandex that will send a chill down your back and up the other side. Mark is a programmer – and you can't trust people who spend their time in front of computer screens. Sunshine travels the city and watches stray people and cats. Sometimes she takes one home for the night for a pitcher of milk or Margaritas.

The plot so far: China's falling for her new roommate, Justin. He's a great dancer, a great dresser, and he smells even better than she does. After a hard day's work as a fitness instructor, she just wants to come home to a warm sensitive man for great sex. What she doesn't realise is that's what Justin wants too. China's just getting over Dennis, a real scum bag. Poor China, it breaks my heart to watch these men taking advantage of her. Is she too stupid to see what's happening or just too good-hearted? And why can't I meet girls this stupid – I mean, good-hearted?

DEAD KELLY

http://www.wolfchild.com/deadkelly/

What's it about? Mark is in love with a beautiful woman called Kelly, which wouldn't be a problem, except that Kelly's dead. That doesn't stop her from walking and talking and asking for favours, though. In fact, she sounds just like my first wife.



The main players: Kelly may be no more dead than many other suburban wives with controlling husbands. Who can be sure? Mark's always been a cynic. Maybe that's why he's never been in love before...

The plot so far: Kelly committed suicide so she can't go to heaven and, in punishment, has been sent to New Jersey. Bad people are trying to kill Mark, but Kelly protects him because, after all, you can't kill a dead person again – although that might change in a few episodes' time. As F Scott Fitzgerald said to Hemingway, "The dead are different than you and me." Or maybe he was talking about the rich... Still, I'll always remember to speak well of the dead.

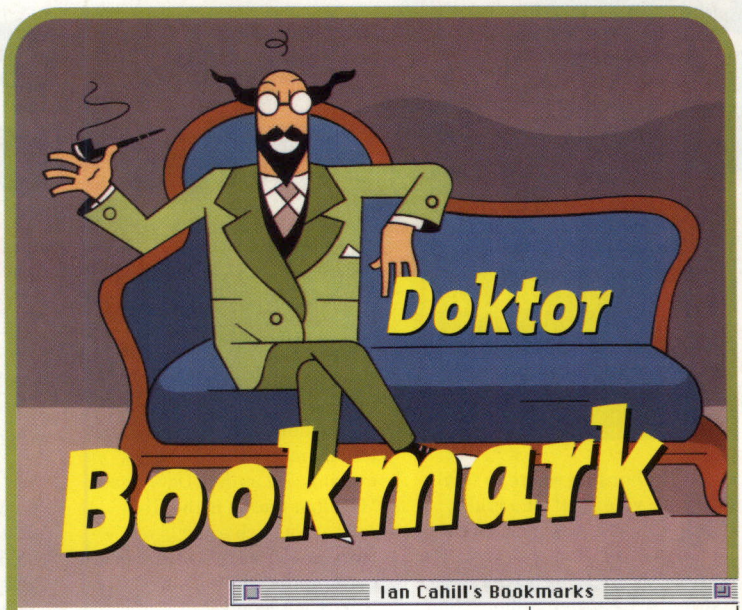
THE CHUCKLEHEADS

http://www.chuckleheads.com/chuckleheads.html

What's it about? Follow the antics of the Dysfunctional Militia Family, who eat twice their weight in red meat each week.

The main players: Missy sews limpet mines on to her bra. Her father's like everyone's dad who reads *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine and throws knives at his kids. Gordon wants a driver's licence, but his family doesn't believe in government papers.

The plot so far: The family's sitting by the radio listening to The Reverend Commander Rawhide's *Sunday Night Anti-Government Family Hour*. Missy is wearing her jungle camouflage panties and preparing for her big date at the Splatter-Free Death Seminar. Nurse Whitey's had it with the family and has shot up Grampa's porta-potty. Not to worry, she didn't use armour-piercing rounds – this time. G Gordo needs a date, so maybe he should stop stuffing C-Rations in his pants first.



Ian Cahill's Bookmarks

Welcome. Hello. Greetings. Or whatever particular hospitable salutation is appropriate for your culture. But, before we begin, permit me to pose a question for you.

How do you get to "know" someone? It is difficult, maybe? Do you ask them what they "do", what breed of dog is their favourite one, which football team they "support"? Do you look at the books on their book shelf, sift through the medications in their bathroom cabinet, or investigate the carrier bag underneath their bed when they go out to get cigarettes?

All of these things are valid. But how do you *really* find out about what we psychiatrists refer to as the "inner life" of a person?

My name is unimportant. It is what I do that you should listen to hard. I am Dr Bookmark. That is, I *am* a doctor *of* The Bookmark. You see, we psychiatrists, we are all interested in the human brain. My speciality is to get to know someone by looking at their browser bookmark list. It is a relatively new position in the field of psychiatry, but it is increasingly being seen as more important. It is kind of a wing-back (attacking full-back) position. That is simple.

My first patient is a Mr Ian Cahill, 27, who comes from Wakefield. Ian's bookmark list has disturbed me greatly since I first looked at it.

Ian is a man who loves the movies. I understand that, because nobody loves the movies more than I do. Also, by the many links to certain pornographic and nude picture sites, I see that he has a healthy appreciation of the human form, and it is my guess that he is some kind of artist – perhaps a painter.

But there is darkness in these blue skies. Darkness shaped like death (Sick Picks), guns (Machine Gun News On-line and other gun-related sites) and – I shudder to mention it – self-mutilation (The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow Official Pages).

But this is okay. I detect detachment and irony, because Ian also likes to laugh *(The Simpsons,* Dr Seuss, the *Loaded* soft-porn-for-boys-too-easily-amused-to-know-better magazine). He has a sense of humour, which, as we psychiatrists know, can act as a crucial emotional vent – particularly for someone who's interested in death and guns and may, metaphorically speaking, snap at any moment.

He would also seem to be something of an aspiring screenwriter (IndieZine: The Source For Independent Filmmakers And Screenwriters). I say "aspiring" because, well, have you ever read the credits of a film and seen the words "Screenplay by Ian Cahill"? I do not think so.

And so, if I – Dr Bookmark – were, for some reason, asked to compose a personal ad for Ian, it would be rather like this:

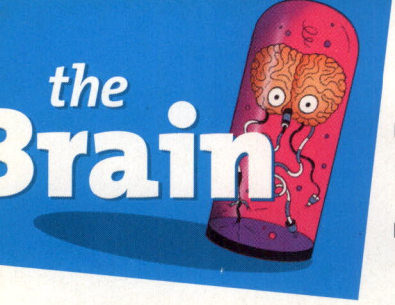
MOVIE BUFF, 27. INTO CREATIVE WRITING, STILL-LIFE FINE ART AND GYNAECOLOGY. ENJOYS ONLY THE AESTHETIC AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF LIGHT-ASSAULT WEAPONRY AND DERIVES A VICARIOUS, MACABRE THRILL AT DEPICTIONS OF DEATH AND HUMAN SELF-DEGRADATION.

Of course, I may be wrong, I accept that. But, and here is the conundrum that all we psychiatrists wrestle with, can the human mind ever truly be fathomed? Do we even possess adequate fathoming equipment? Perhaps we will never know.

Fancy some serious Net analysis? Then Doktor Bookmark can help. Simply print out your bookmarks and send them to Doktor Bookmark, *Connect* magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Avon, BA1 2BW or attach them to an e-mail marked "Dr Bookmark" to connect@futurenet.co.uk. He's very discreet, so if you want to remain anonymous, just inform the Doktor.

Mr Showbiz
Sick Picks
Random Joke Server
Great Outdoors Recreation Pages
The Jim Rose Circus
Fortean Times
Machine Gun News
Alta Vista
The Simpsons
BBC TV
Loaded.com
The Ultimate TV List
Indie Zine
Hollywood On-line
Men Behaving Badly
Yahoo
Dr Seuss
The Dragon Unofficial Bruce Lee Home Page
Soccer Net
Zeldman
Hotwired
Area 51
Naughty Links
Persian Kitty
Playboy.com
Ain't It Cool News

Patrick Regout



TEKNO! TEKNO! TEKNO! TEKNO!

Fluffy bras ahoy! ClubIt puts your local Ritzy's on-line. Andrew Weatherall need not apply.

Choosing where to strut your stuff on a Friday night is tough. A spot of Amyl House down at The Heavenly Social or maybe some drum 'n' bass over at Blue Note?

Previously aimed at the student community, ClubIt hopes to take the pain out of such decisions with its on-line database of clubbing. It's hardly Creem or Ministry Of Sound, however, with the clubs covered being of the mainstream variety.

"ClubIt will always be a site for 'mainstream night clubs'," explains site author Dave Shaw. "The first reason is that the market for such a site is vast – more people visit mainstream clubs in the UK than any other type. The second is that other clubs are already represented in one way or another."

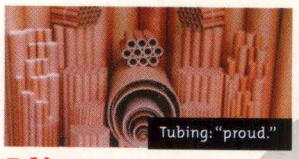
ClubIt boasts details on a wide range of nightclubs from Ritzy's in Bristol to The Black Orchid in Nottingham. A guest book and discounted ticket order form were recently added and Shaw has big plans for the future.

"In the short term we plan to add DJ sound clips, video clips of the venues, screensavers and a Restaurant Booking system. In the long term we plan to create a VR street with all the venues along it. You'll be able to go into any venue and look around it."

ClubIt has gone down a storm with its student audience for over a year now. See what you've been missing out on **(http://www.ClubIt.com).**

Why On The Web?

Connect's monthly round-up of probably the most boring sites in the world. Make that definitely...


Tubing: "proud."

Tubing
http://www.crayford-tubes.co.uk/
"Crayford tubes is proud to announce that it's the first UK cardboard tube manufacturer to be on the Internet!"

Cutlery
http://www.philfine.com
"We carry many brands and models of high quality auto and conventional knives for the demanding enthusiast."

Carpeting
http://carpets.com/
"We're more than just a carpet connection! Many of the retailers carry WOOD, VINYL, and CERAMIC flooring also."

Slippers
http://207.134.69.10/nova-scotia/microwaveslippers/
"Heat up slippers in microwave from one to two minutes upside down (sole up), place one half glass of water beside slippers in the microwave to keep grains moist."

Baskets
http://csbh.mhv.net/~abeebe/basket.html
"Your one-stop shop for conventions, associations, exhibitions, weaving materials and basketry fiction."

Buckets
http://www.dmssoft.com/dsmetal/
"The definitive catalogue for painted buckets, plus details of the latest lid designs and bucket festivals."

Sewage
http://www.brigadoon.com/~meplan9/ss.htm
"TIRED OF DUMPING RV SEWAGE THE HARD WAY? We all share the problem of sewage disposal when on the road. The hose is messy, the pipes are polluted and there is plenty to see and smell!"

Cabbages
http://discworld.imaginary.com:5678/cabbage/cabbage.html
"World cabbage day is a day in which the pleasure and simplicity of the cabbage is celebrated. It's on February 17, so write it down now. On this day, celebrate! Eat cabbages and be merry!"

Corkscrews
http://www.corkscrew.com/
"An interesting corkscrew can spark a lively conversation, and a beautiful one can add an aesthetic dimension to the experience of opening and enjoying a bottle of wine."

Baskets: "fiction."

Netometer

Find out what's cool and what's fool in Connect's corner of the wired world...

RealVideo
Nifty video streamed straight through the Web. The grainy images need working on, but it could change cybercasts as we know them. Whatever happens, we're keeping our eyes crossed.

Rio Grrl Quake Clans
Blowing lethal kisses and making a gut casserole of gameboys the globe over. The Cyber St Trinians of network gaming prove that video games aren't much macho any more.

Mediadome
C/NET and Intel outdo MTV with their own interactive pop havens – mix songs on-line without the need for extra hardware. *The Fugees* (http://www.mediadome.com) is well worth a look.

Celebrity Bashing
Lamp your most hated star around the chops without ending up in court. Featuring Richard and Judy, David Mellor and *The Spice Girls*, Urban75's stress-busting Slap A Celeb Page is still an irresistible click for the terminally irritated.

Internet Weddings
About as embarrassing as your uncle dropping his pants at the reception disco. Mmm... romantic.

The Netscape Comet
For generally behaving like the sneeze that never comes in times of stunted ac-ac-access.

Black Thursday Logos
It was over a year ago, so take them off! The on-line equivalent of those red noses from Comic Relief '89 you still see on A-reg Honda Civics.

MIDI Applets
Sounding like an ice cream van driving off a cliff, those unstoppable Web ditties are still shuddering skulls across the on-line world.

Colour-blind Web Designers
That lid-bleeding mix of turquoise text on a red background... Clean the sick from your eyes!

Battle of the Bandwidths

The humble monster: spine-snapping behemoth who eats puny humans for breakfast or just the figment of a Skittles-addled imagination? It doesn't matter. The Net is teeming with spooky Webmasters who glorify the gory, deifying anything from the bride of Frankenstein to Godzooky, that best-forgotten nephew of Godzilla. But as that Highlander bloke says, there can only be one. So to settle the matter once and for all, *Connect* storms the castle with only a torch in its hand to talk to these Web creatures of the night. Which is the most fanatical fan page of all time? Who will be HTML king of the monsters? Hush now, and let rubber-suited battle commence!

Monster & URL	Why the obsession, Mr Webmaster?	So, contacted by any nutters recently?	Godzilla vs your monster. And the winner is...?	W.O.F * Rating *Worryingly Obsessive Fan
Godzilla **Japanese home wrecker** http://www.ultranet.com/~barry/godzilla.htm	"Godzilla is simply the king of the monsters, the coolest of the cool and the baddest of the bad." Barry S Goldberg Esq.	"Well, somebody sent me an e-mail threatening to come over and kill all my pets. I found that rather spooky."	Or in this case, Mechagodzilla... "Definitely Godzilla. As much as I like Mechagodzilla, he's just a machine. Godzilla, though, is a force of nature unto himself."	10/10 Totally devoted.
Freddy **Prune-faced teen killer** http://stu.cofc.edu/~chandlec/freddy.html	"Freddy's just so sarcastic and mean – but so cool at the same time! I just love him!!!!!!" The "Umpteenth" Doctor – with keyboard stuck on exclamations.	"Some guy said he'd hunt me down if I didn't take down the Web site! I didn't! And he hasn't! Yet!"	"Ha ha! Freddy!!! He'd simply make himself larger than 'Zilla and flatten him! In dreams, Freddy is all-powerful! That is, of course, if 'Zilla dreams :)!!!" Er... Right...	9/10 Verging on the monomaniacal.
Lobster Man **'90s B-movie wannabe** http://www.brainex.com/lobster.html	"Orson Welles's code name for his infamous *War Of the Worlds* radio hoax was the 'Lobster Man From Mars Show' so I thought, why not ..." Stanley Sheff, Webmaster and movie director... End plug.	"Yeah, The Shrimp Maiden from Neptune – but her comments aren't exactly suitable for publication."	"The Lobster Man, without a doubt. Godzilla doesn't have a ray gun that reduces living beings into skeletons. And his radioactive fire-breath has no effect on the Lobster Man's exoskeleton..."	7/10 Lock yer windows!
Zombie **Comatose braingobbler** http://terracom.net/~soul42/zombie/zombie.html	"Monsters are just so damn cool but zombies have a special something. They are so simple, but yet complex. BRAINS! BRAINS! BRAINS!" Brian "A Touch Preoccupied" Giese.	"Nothing unpleasant really, but I've received fan mail from a certain Bruce Campbell." Which was nice.	"If the zombie snuck up on Godzilla as he was smashing some happy little town and bit him... Well, then we'd have a big kick-ass zombie. I for one would pay to see that movie." Bet you would.	6/10 Bonkers in the nut.
Studio Beasts **Dracula, Wolfman et al** http://www-leland.stanford.edu/~krouse/monsters.htm	"First, I enjoyed being scared as a kid by those Saturday night black-and-white horror films from Universal. Second, I like the science." Mauri Krouse.	"I've gotten many e-mails from various hosts of TV shows that feature horror films late at night and they..." Not spooky. NEXT!	"Boy. Dracula would certainly have to suck a lot of blood, but if he changes to a mist, he'd be unstompable. As Dracula can only fight at night, this might, on further consideration, be a draw."	5/10 Love at first bite.
Chupacabra **Goat-sucking vamp thing** http://home.earthlink.net/~mej023/chuppage.html	"My Dad showed me some scary pictures of this real-life Puerto Rican monster and I thought, 'cool'..." Zach Johnson. In association with Daddy Johnson.	"I do receive a lot of weird submissions for the Pet Cemetery I run. Man, there must be a lot of weird people on the Net..."	"Some people believe that the Chupacabra has magical powers and that a force field surrounds it. He'd have a hard time, but, well, Godzilla would kick his butt in the end..." Honesty at last.	5/10 Sucker for detail.
Nessie **Mystical Scottish log** http://www.nessie.co.uk/nessie/nessie.html	"Y'know, a lot of people are curious about a lot of things, but when it comes to something that is hard to explain then that curiosity can turn into obsession." Carol and Russ at "Ness" Scape.	"I would love to see Nessie sunbathe in the nude... If she's looking for a tender loving mate, I'm available 'for all her needs'." From the frankly terrifying guest book.	"Being a lady, Nessie would turn her back on violence. I reckon Godzilla would have a hard job catching her – after all nobody has in nearly 1,400 years."	3/10 Flogging a dead monster.

Cyber Guru

No.1 Stelarc

First up in our regular series of Web nut profiles, an artiste who's quite literally hooked on the Internet.

Stelarc?
His original name was Stelios Arcadiou but, like fellow Greek George Michael, he fancied something a bit snappier. He's "Stel" to his friends, of course.

It's a stage name, then?
Not exactly. He's changed it officially and it's on his Australian passport (he's lived there since the '50s).

And what does he put under "Occupation"?
Tricky one. "Human sculpture", "cybernetic android", "professional masochist"... Take your pick. He'd probably prefer "performance artist", though.

A bit like David Bowie in his Beckenham Arts Lab days?
Kind of, but whereas the impressionable young Davy Jones was into mime, Stelarc's main interest is messing about with his robotic third arm and hanging from the ceiling suspended only by a few metal hooks jabbed under his skin.

Sounds painful.
Don't worry about it. "Hooks are just convenient metal shapes that you can insert into the skin and you can suspend your body from," Stel reassures his cyberchums. "I really want to defuse this emotional obsession with hooks because they conjure up dead carcasses and all that stuff, and that's not really the point of it all..."

And the point of all this is?
Stelarc's number one priority is redesigning the human body – genetically and technologically – because he believes we've created an environment our bodies can no longer cope with. The skin suspensions are all about testing the limits of the body's capabilities. "Of course, it [his first skin suspension] was also a breathtakingly beautiful physical and psychological experience," he recalls fondly.

So you can get off on it, then?
Yes, but getting high à la Stelarc isn't easy. First, his body is propped up with wooden tripods and the hook-ended cords are connected to the skin. Then the supports are gradually removed from the bottom up and his body is slowly hoisted upwards, sometimes counterbalanced with rocks and suspended within a "tensegrity icosahedron". Whatever that is.

Anything else to remember?
Allow six inches for skin stretching.

I shan't be trying that at home.
We should hope not, but you can get involved with another of Stelarc's tricks – digital choreography. Every now and again he places electrodes on his body so you can send signals over the Internet to stimulate his muscles and make the man-puppet move. Stelarc's Aesthetic Of Prosthetics **(http://www.well.com/user/markdery/ESCAPE/VELOCITY/author/stelarc.html)** discusses his 1995 performance "Fractal Flesh – Split Body: Voltage" and explains, in gory detail, how Stelarc's limbs were simultaneously controlled by people in Paris, Helsinki and Amsterdam. If that's not enough for you, try the "Stimbod Fractal Flesh Performance" **(http://www.t0.or.at/stelarc/stelarc.htm)**.

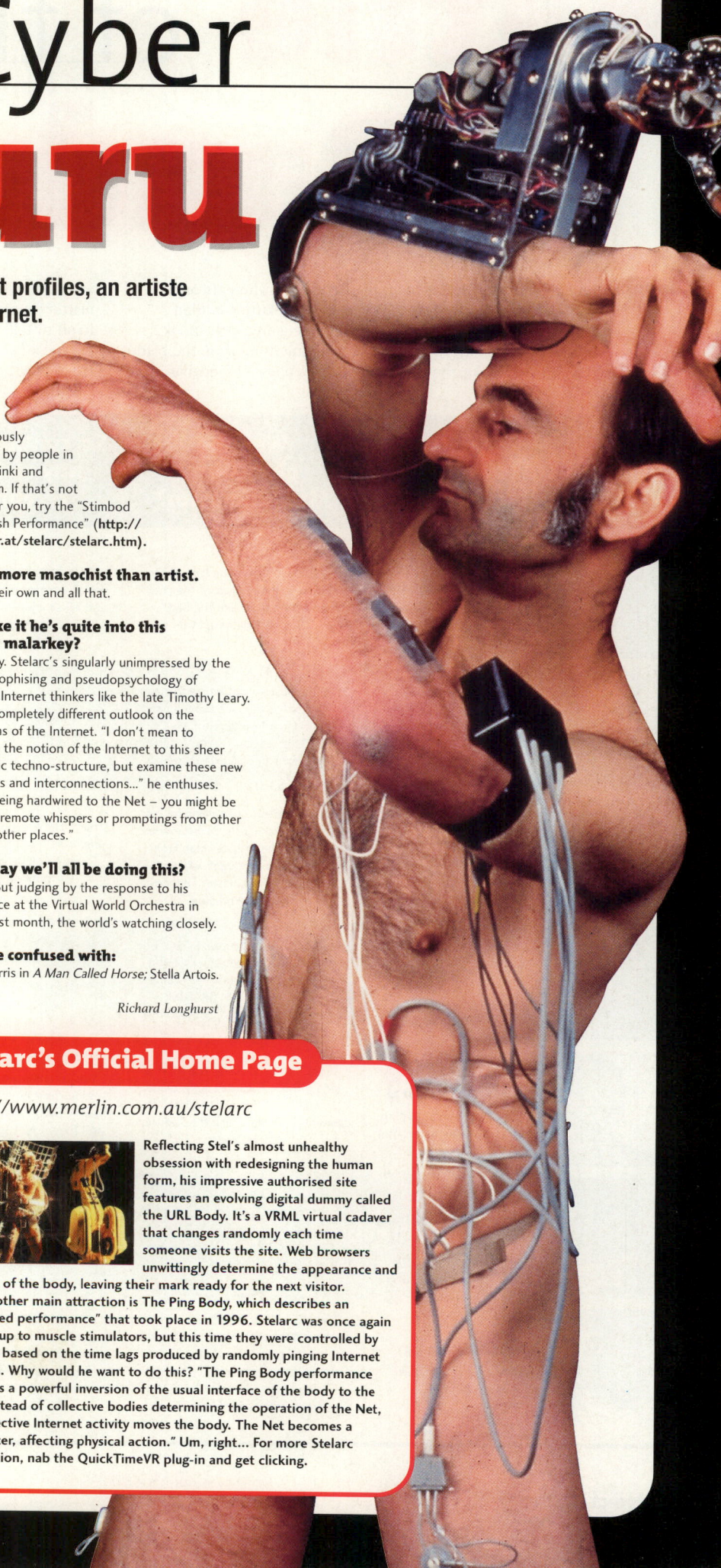
Sounds more masochist than artist.
Each to their own and all that.

But I take it he's quite into this Internet malarkey?
Not exactly. Stelarc's singularly unimpressed by the cod philosophising and pseudopsychology of libertarian Internet thinkers like the late Timothy Leary. He has a completely different outlook on the applications of the Internet. "I don't mean to impoverish the notion of the Internet to this sheer materialistic techno-structure, but examine these new possibilities and interconnections..." he enthuses. "Imagine being hardwired to the Net – you might be started by remote whispers or promptings from other people in other places."

So one day we'll all be doing this?
Doubt it. But judging by the response to his performance at the Virtual World Orchestra in Glasgow last month, the world's watching closely.

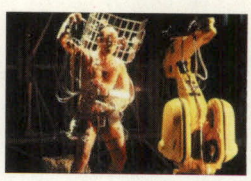
Not to be confused with:
Richard Harris in *A Man Called Horse;* Stella Artois.

Richard Longhurst



Stelarc's Official Home Page

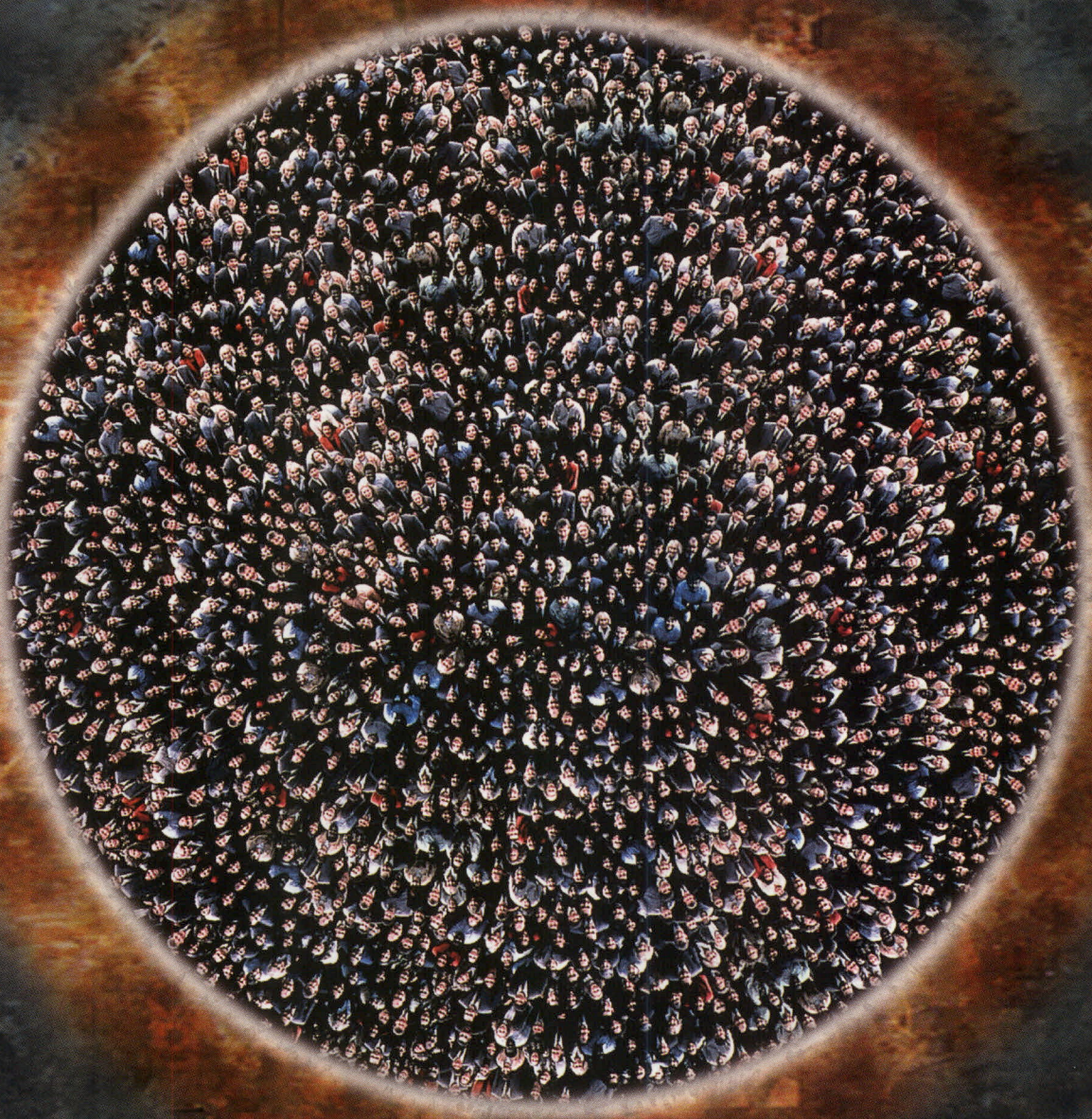
http://www.merlin.com.au/stelarc



Reflecting Stel's almost unhealthy obsession with redesigning the human form, his impressive authorised site features an evolving digital dummy called the URL Body. It's a VRML virtual cadaver that changes randomly each time someone visits the site. Web browsers unwittingly determine the appearance and rotation of the body, leaving their mark ready for the next visitor.

Another main attraction is The Ping Body, which describes an "uploaded performance" that took place in 1996. Stelarc was once again hooked up to muscle stimulators, but this time they were controlled by voltages based on the time lags produced by randomly pinging Internet domains. Why would he want to do this? "The Ping Body performance produces a powerful inversion of the usual interface of the body to the Web. Instead of collective bodies determining the operation of the Net, the collective Internet activity moves the body. The Net becomes a transducer, affecting physical action." Um, right... For more Stelarc stimulation, nab the QuickTimeVR plug-in and get clicking.

FREE WITH EVERY GAME OF POD...



...OPPONENTS FROM ALL ROUND THE WORLD

POD is the fastest, meanest racing game ever. And it's the only game that lets you play opponents worldwide - in split screen, link, over the Net, LAN or modem in any combination. It's also the first to harness the full potential of MMX™, 3DFX and Pentium. POD comes with 16 tracks and 8 cars and from May 1, you can download 2 new tracks and a new car free via the Net. Try the shareware and catch the bug!

"A classy, impressive arcade blast" 4/5 Stars CGW

"One of the best arcade racers on the PC" 90% PC ZONE CLASSIC

Ubi Soft ENTERTAINMENT

pod

http://www.ubisoft.com

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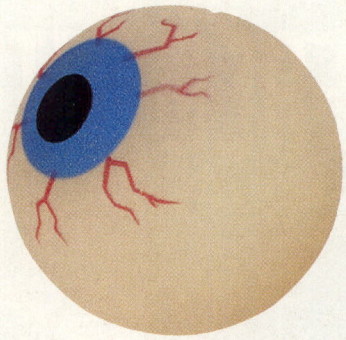
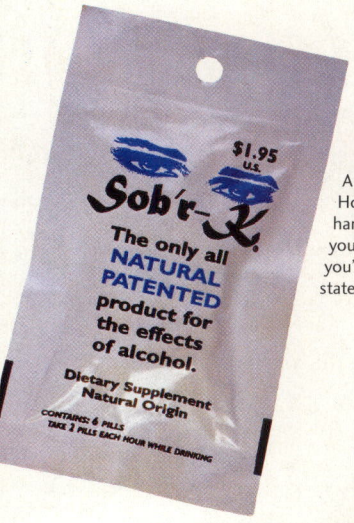
Net Shopper



Of bouncing eyeballs, hangover cures and screaming pillows. Affordable, fun and just a little bit dumb, the first in our trolley dash around those cheap 'n' unique Web malls.

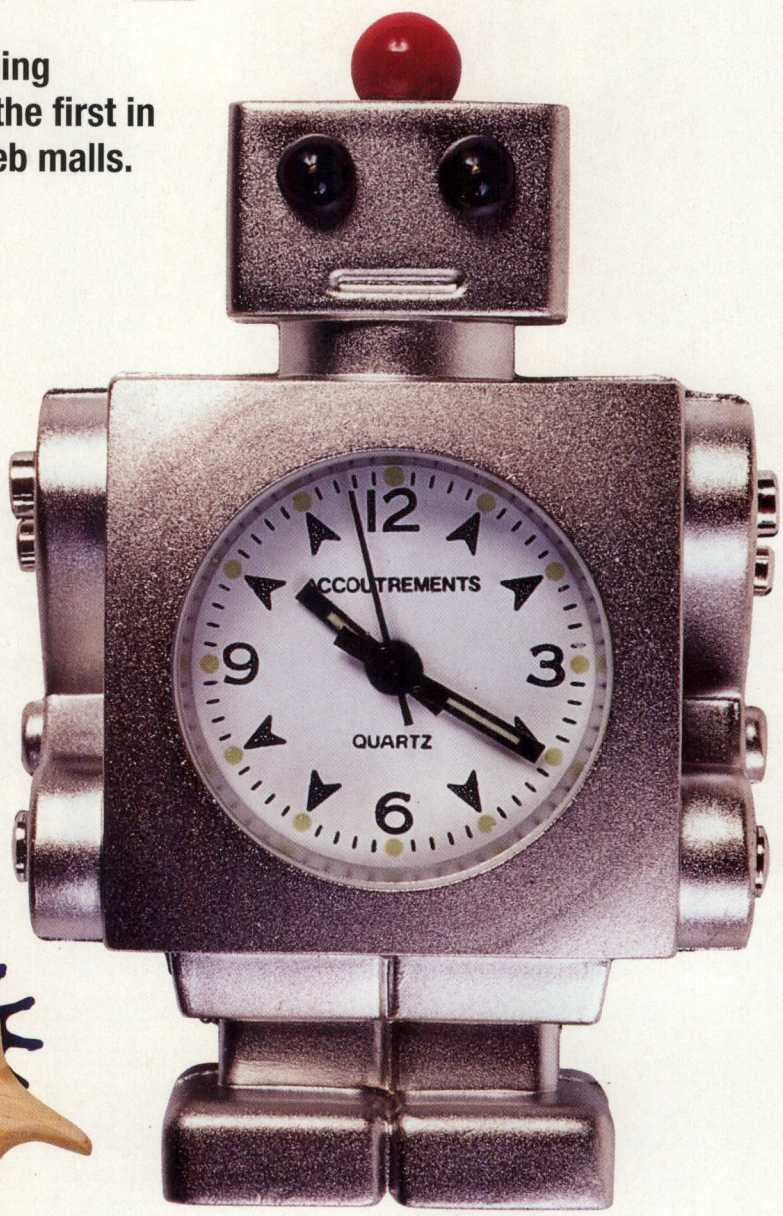


1 Sob'r-K Hangover Cure

A potential breakthrough in resolving that post-Hooch head throb, Sob'r-K replaces the parts other hangover cures cannot reach. You have to take it *while* you're drinking, and God knows how you'll remember that in your sozzled state, but it works! Honest.

2 Elastic Band Guns

Those constantly stung by the towel-lasher in their life can now wreak sweet revenge with these pistols. Choose from two styles (Colt 45 or Texas Long Barrel), load up on rubber bullets and be the Fastest Twanger In The West.



3 Mini Robot Clock

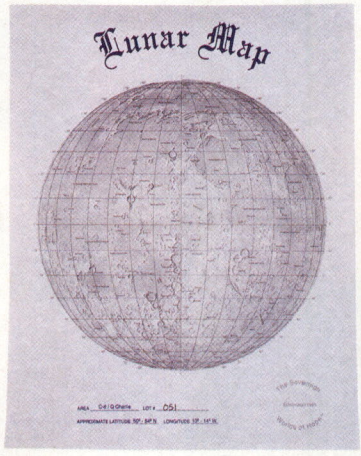
"WAKE UP, FEEBLE EARTHLING!" Cute, compact and designed with Metropolis-style chic, this ace timepiece fits into the the palm of your hand and is an ideal droidy treat for the sci-fi spod in your life.

4 Bouncing Eyeballs

They glow in the dark, bounce higher than a genetically-enhanced kangaroo wearing hover boots and are more fun than a barrel fulla monkeys. Also ideal for scaring the bejeezus out of your neighbours at night.

5 Giggling Mona Lisa & Screaming Scream Pillows

Soft on the head but hard on the ears, just one push in the right place and inhuman screams and whinnies assault your lobes like a banshee in a bottle. Invite a friend to stay over, give 'em this to park their head on and – yay! – instant insomnia guaranteed!



6 Move To The Moon

Wannabe universal overlords will no doubt be delighted to hear that they can now own up to 1, 777.58 acres of the moon. Oh so handy for intergalactic domination, not to mention a neat space-age retreat when Mother Earth coughs her last. Mmmm... Cheery thoughts.

7 Wiggly Hula Doll

The kitsch, hip-wiggling mantelpiece masterpiece of the moment: one nudge and Little Miss Diecast jolts into a skirt-wobbling hula frenzy. Who said Hawaiian nodding dog?

8 Headball

A stress-ball with a neat twist – send Raging Head Cheese a photo of your least favourite person, they scan the picture on to the headball and there you have it: your very own personalised punchbag. So far, we've ordered 15 David Hasslehoffs.

Prices & Productomation

1 **Stockists:** *Sob'r-K*
http://www.hangovercure.com
Price: $10 for five packs

2 **Stockists:** *Surefire Products*
http://www.surefireproducts.com
Price: Colt 45 & Texas Long Barrel both £8.50. Bands 99p per pack

3 **Stockists:** *Archie McPhee*
http://www.mcphee.com/index.html
Price: $24.95

4 **Stockists:** *Archie McPhee*
http://www.mcphee.com/index.html
Price: $4.50 for a set of six

5 **Stockists:** *Unemployed Philosophers Guild*
http://www.1q.com/pinheads/
Price: Giggling Mona Lisa $26
Screaming Scream $26

6 **Stockists:** *Moon Shop*
http://www.moonshop.com
Price: $15.99 + $1.16 lunar tax for 1,777.58 moon acres

7 **Stockists:** *Hula Gifts*
http://www.hulagift.com/
Price: $14.95

8 **Stockists:** *Raging Head Cheese*
http://www.netmart.com/kudz/headchez/homepage.htm
Price: $19.95

Entertainment

Contents

30 Waiting For Bod

Scriptorama

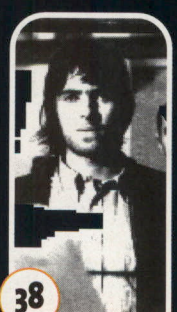
Movies that read as good as they play...

Monty: Do you like vegetables? I've always been fond of root crops, but I only started to grow last summer. I happen to think the cauliflower more beautiful than the rose.
Withnail: Chin chin.
Monty: Do you grow?
Withnail: Geraniums.
Monty: Oh, you little traitors. I think the carrot infinitely more fascinating than the geranium. The carrot has mystery. Flowers are essentially tarts. Prostitutes for the bees. There is, you'll agree, a certain je ne sais quoi oh so very special about a firm young carrot. Excuse me. Do help yourselves to another drink.
[Withnail turns and reaches a bottle over from the sideboard. He takes a long swig.]
I: What's all this? The man's mad.
Withnail: Eccentric.
I: Eccentric? He's insane. Not only that, he's a raving homosexual...

http://www.zen.co.uk/home/page/bear/withnail.txt

35 Trivia

36 Movies



38 Music

40 Telly

TV SOUND BITES

© BBC © Channel four

Stephen Dalton

Three months past its launch date, and Channel 5 is still getting a bad reception from UK viewers. And it's the same style-over-content vibe on-line. Hell, at least they're consistent...

Two words for you: "five" and "channel". Now rearrange them into the name of a recent addition to Britain's terrestrial TV networks. Bit of a toughie, huh? Don't worry if it's too challenging – that means you're exactly the sort of viewer Channel 5 is looking for.

Channel 5 has a budget less than half that of Channel 4's. It's tempting to argue that this equation is also reflected in its target audience IQ, but I'll be generous – six months from now, say, they might have figured out how to work their transmitters properly, that much trumpeted 9pm movie will have risen above straight-to-video calibre and Jack Docherty will stop looking so pathetically grateful each time some micro-celeb consents to talk to him.

But even so, for cabled-up couch potatoes like me, the problem with C5 is that it's actually Channel 55. There's something tiresomely familiar about its relentlessly breezy style, undemanding tone and stripped-and-stranded format. And why does it have to air cheap and cheerful, bulk-bought shows at the same time every single night? Is learning to tell the time really that mentally taxing?

It's no surprise that this rush-built, style-over-content *Hello!* magazine ethos also infests the station's official Web site **(http://www.channel5.co.uk).** What you get is a smartly-dressed smoothy of a home page, high on Prozac-powered propaganda and low on useful information, with the content more carefully spin doctored than Tony Blair's smile. Hence oddles of beaming blurb about "modern, mainstream entertainment", but absolutely no mention of delayed kick-off dates, feeble broadcast signals, tragic viewing figures or ropey, no-budget, bargain basement soaps. At least the reception is an improvement on its terrestrial telly equivalent.

Worthwhile TV station Web sites should be a sophisticated complement to their cathode cousins, as with Channel 4's effort **(http://www.channel4.co.uk),** or even a brilliant informational resource in their own right, such as the CNN site **(http://www.cnn.com/).** Channel 5's is neither. Instead, it's a bland sales pitch for potential advertisers, bombarding you with sexy images and snappy sound bites. After all, it was those self-same advertisers' demands for a low-cost alternative to ITV and Channel 4 that instigated C5 in the first place.

It's a smartly-dressed smoothy of a page, high on Prozac-powered propaganda, with the content more carefully spin doctored than Tony Blair's smile.

Finding myself unhealthily fixated with the new station, I sought refuge in the excellent unofficial on-line shrine to C5, contained within Andrew Wiseman's 625 Television Room **(http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~bandc/a.wiseman/625/c5.htm).** Wiseman has twice taken C5's failings to task on the Channel 4's public forum *Right To Reply,* but his Web site is no scathing hate-zine. The criticism is constructive, deploring the constant on-screen logo and insightfully profiling the top brass as "the person who put Anne and Nick together, the person who was in charge of *Richard And Judy,* and the company responsible for *Neighbours".* You'll also find detailed technical advice on how to obtain the best signal.

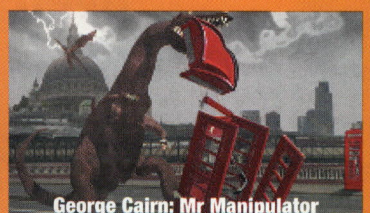
Wiseman's site is worthy but informative. This is, of course, precisely the opposite of the channel's ethos, but it's comforting to know that at least *somebody* is looking out for its viewers. On that note, I'll leave you with a spooky coincidence: what was the name of Clive Sinclair's risible electric go-kart and commercial flop of the '80s? Exactly. Go figure.

42 Comedy

44 Art

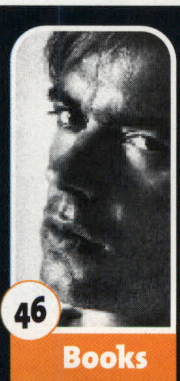
ELECTRIC GALLERY

Web-only art for the digital masses...



George Cairn: Mr Manipulator

http://www.luton.ac.uk/george.cairns/


46 Books

47 Magazines

YER ICONS AND YER RATINGS

Web site

Newsgroup

Hot Spot!

The must-see site of the month

★★★★★ Near Net perfection

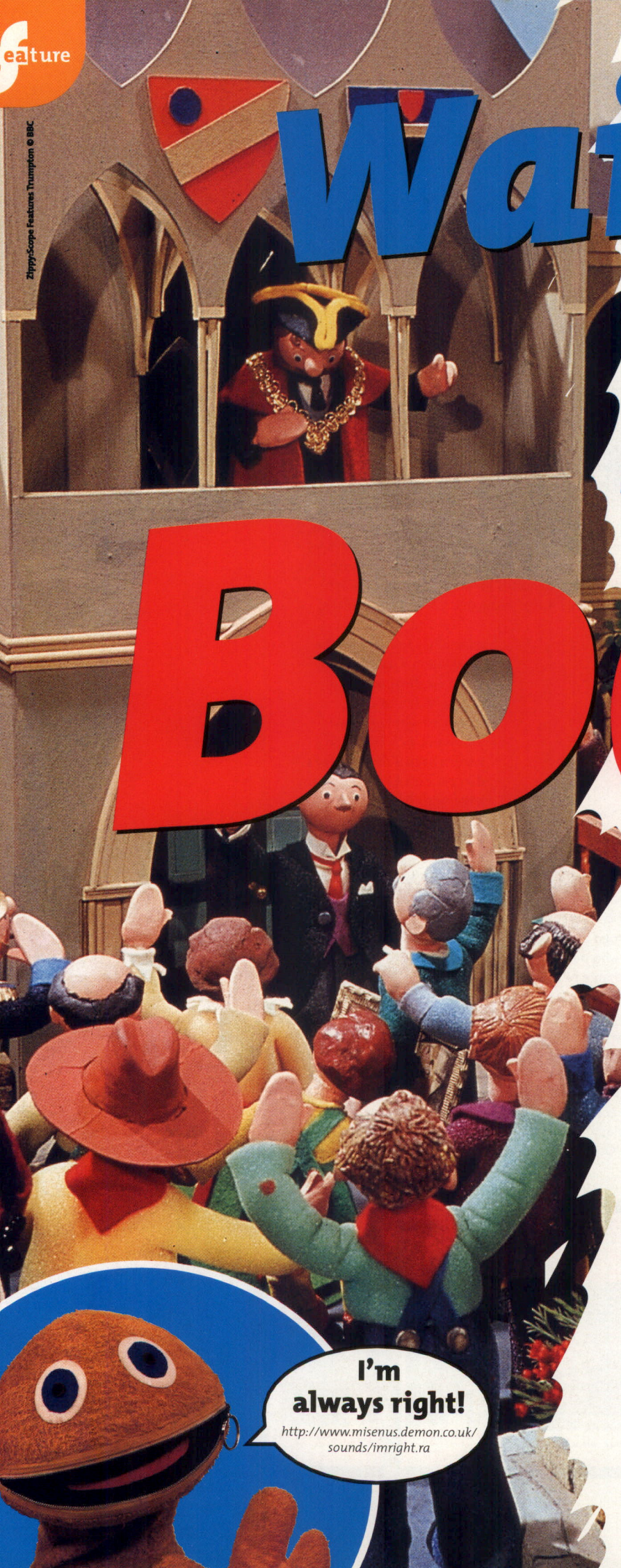
★★★★ Well worth a click

★★★ Above average

★★ Mostly mediocre

★ Cyberplop, frankly

Waiting for Bod



ZippyScope Features Trumpton © BBC

Scope Features

Remember when monkeys were magic and knitted mice lived on the moon? Mike Goldsmith tunes into the fandabbydozeyist timewarp telly sites you ever did see...

Once again, you find us in the Frog and Modem, flummoxed, flustered and floundering pathetically on the bar room floor after a couple of stiff shandies. The reason for our state? None, usually, but he used to be on telly at lunchtimes, had a penchant for bananas and was called something like Popoff. But we can't quite remember his name. We need help. Badly.

And, by the leather-clad thighs of Sally James, help is here. While lesser mortals are quite content to stroke their chins Jimmy Hill-style and spell "Shell Oil" on an upside-down calculator, the Internet has dragged the dusty world of children's television back from its cathode grave. Trusty sound files, QuickTime video clips and JPEG pictures are all there to indulge you in shameless nostalgia.

Admittedly, it's not exactly steering the cybercommunity into the next millennium, but when your computer can inform you that it was Topov who necked bananas in *Pipkins* all those years ago, who the hell cares?

Strutting his stuffing like a carpet-covered dictator, Zippy is the Bungle-baiting overlord of children's TV and we are his disciples.

It wasn't always like this. A year or so ago, the Net was home to Johnny Yank alone. While sites for *Gumby, Space Ghost* and other such postslacker ephemeras were ten a penny, the chances of stumbling on a *Rentaghost* sound file were nonexistent. Not any more. The Web can now decorate your desktop with pictures of Captain Pugwash, play the theme tune from *Chorlton And The Wheelies* and generally make you the envy of all your '70s-fixated chums. But why this sudden swing back to Blighty?

"After many drunken arguments in the pub, I thought I'd try and find some answers so that we could move on to more meaningful drunken conversations," explains Paul Walker. "I searched the Net for *Bagpuss,* as no-one could remember the name of the Woodpecker bookend (it's Professor Yaffle), and no *Bagpuss* site was found." With that, the dazzling Classic '70s And '80s UK Kids' TV Page **(http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/1011/index.html)** was born.

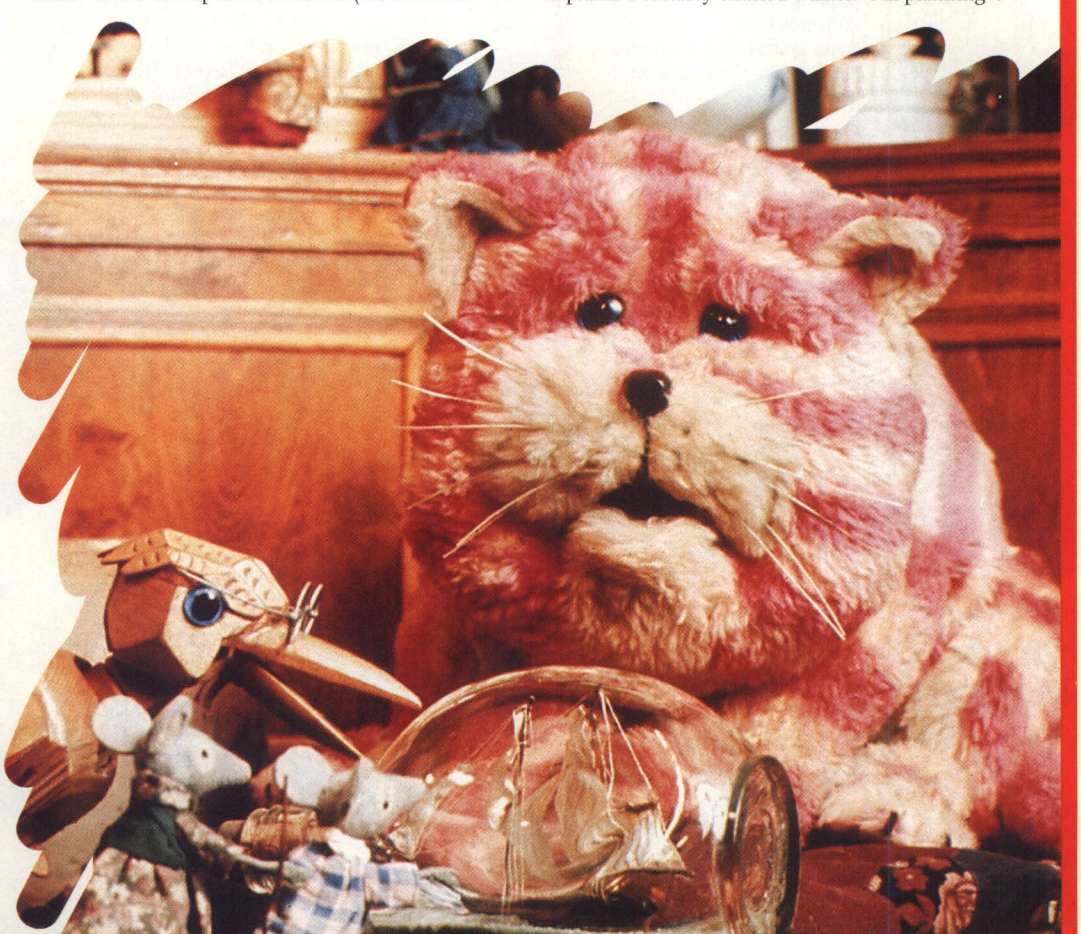
What started as "a bit of a laugh" has snowballed into a site that cries "Bookmark me NOW!" with the high-pitched screech of the eternal seven-year-old. *Jamie And The Magic Torch, Mr Benn, Ivor The Engine...* It's all here and it's all backed up with how-the-hell-did-they-get-that? photos. This isn't just the work of a man with an almost unnatural interest in Pingu **(http://www.ncl.ac.uk/~nmac5/pingu.html),** but also one who muses over such tragedies as how *Beat The Teacher* "went downhill after Bruno Brookes took over". Obsessed? Most certainly, but he's not alone in his trivial pursuits.

Following any of the links that adorn Paul's page will take you to Web sites where it's forever 1974. You want sound clips of *Rainbow's* **(http://www.misenus.demon.co.uk/rainbow.htm)** mouth-on-a-stick Zippy? No problem. How about an animated GIF of Mr Benn **(http://www.doc-h.demon.co.uk/benn.htm)** swapping his suit for a wizard's cloak? Easy-peasy.

But what about *Clapperboard?* Or *On Safari?* Or *The Great Egg Race* presented by the original mad scientist, Professor Heinz Wolf? Um...

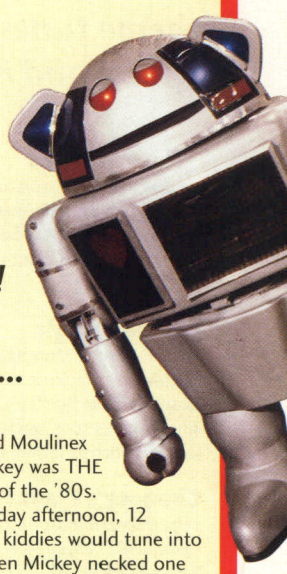
The studenty fare of *Rentaghost* **(http://www.claypole.demon.co.uk/)** and *The Wombles* **(http://www.powerup.com.au/~twalden/womble.html)** inevitably have their on-line shrines, but the Net's attempt to replicate the TV years of 1974 to 1984 is still far from complete. This is not, however, for want of trying.

"The sounds from Bod were a real discovery and the *Jamie And The Magic Torch* theme was a golden find – everyone had been asking me for that," explains a suitably chuffed Walker. "I'm planning



Return of the Mick

Stop Press! Metal Mickey found alive and on-line in Clapham! Connect investigates...



Polished of exterior and Moulinex of voicebox, Metal Mickey was THE freewheeling loverman of the '80s. At 5.15pm every Saturday afternoon, 12 million robot-obsessed kiddies would tune into his metallic capers. When Mickey necked one of his favourite Atomic Thunderbusters, sweet shop shelves across the nation would be emptied. And then he disappeared... That is, until the Net turned up.

So Mickey, where've you been, old boy?

"I've been languishing, mate. Cool dark room, they said. It'll be good for you to rest after the series, they said! It's been too long I say. Give me God's good air and get me out of this cupboard more often. I don't mind rusting, it's resting I have trouble with."

So who's to thank for this blessed revival of vocoder-related robotics? Step forward John Edward, creator of both Metal Mickey and his shiny new Web site.

"The Net is the way everything is going these days," explains John. "I was table-thumping about it two years ago when I met Andy Curtis, who kindly offered to build and manage the site for Mickey. Several thousand hits later, he's handed the hot task back to me to sort out on Mickey's behalf. I can assure you that Mickey has very definite ideas on how he likes things..."

Which means sound clips of Mickey belching "naughty little fruitbat", snapshots of Mickey hanging with the ladies, and the chance to e-mail the aluminium Lothario himself. So we did. And we quizzed him about his oft-rumoured addiction to real-world loo cubes Atomic Thunderbusters.

"I must confess, I was hooked. But now I'm free, even an open jar can't tempt me to... Mmm mmm mmm mmm! You see, I can do it. I only had one that time. Next time, I'll just smell the lid. Then I'll be right off them again. Look, I'll show you."

Erm, right. Anyway, the '80s are quite a while ago now and there's only so much WD-40 a tin can can drink. How do you keep yourself from rusting up?

"Exercise. Keep the batteries charged. Charge 'em, drop 'em. Charge 'em, drop 'em. It's what keeps me young and alive. I'm only 18 years old now, you know. Or is it 19? Boogie Boogie!"

Ladies and gentlemen, Metal Mickey has left the building.

To make contact with ol' rusty nuts himself, and even submit your character designs for the upcoming, all new Metal Mickey 2, best visit The Metal Mickey Home Page **(http://www.netkonect.co.uk/~metalmickey/).**

Metal Mickey: Scope Features Tiswaz: Scope Features Bagpuss: ©BBC

Name That Tune

Jog that memory, hum that ditty and make all your friends laugh like drains – yes, it's those '70s kids' TV theme tunes in full. Altogether now, "Up above the streets and houses..."

The Wombles
http://www.carleton.ca/~pwigfull/womble/womble.wav
Sounds like: Post-Sergeant Pepper *Beatles* meet comedian Mike Harding.

Animal Magic
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/Anmagic.wav
Sounds like: Bootsy Collins smashing his funk tractor into Johnny Morris's farmhouse.

Chegger's Plays Pop
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/cheggers.wav
Sounds like: 'Whole Lotta Lovin'' with added Hooch.

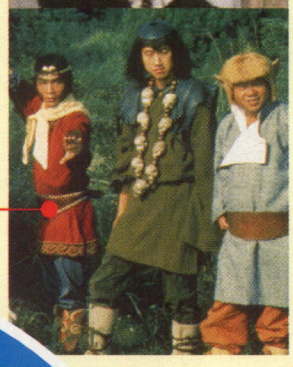
Chorlton And The Wheelies
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/chorlton.wav
Sounds like: An inebriated uncle abusing a karaoke machine.

Captain Pugwash
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/pugwash.wav
Sounds like: A homoerotic Riverdance shanty.

Dangermouse
http://www.webweaver.net/dm/sounds/intro.wav
Sounds like: Dick Barton Special Agent. Only rodenty.

Ivor The Engine
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/ivor.wav
Sounds like: Ronnie Barker's musical farts.

Monkey
http://www.csc.liv.ac.uk/~u5ms/monkey/waves/intro.wav
Sounds like: A camp keep-fit tape with extra vitamin disco.



Jamie And The Magic Torch
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/theme.wav
Sounds like: *AC/DC* goes kindergarten.

Magic Roundabout
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/maground.wav
Sounds like: Throwing up on the waltzers.

Bod
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/ theme.wav
Sounds like: *The Spinners* on helium.

Paddington
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/paddington.wav
Sounds like: Marilyn Monroe's 'I Want To Be Loved By You' without the boo-boop-be-doo bit. Shut up! It does!

Playaway
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/playaway.wav
Sounds like: Brian Cant.

Mr Benn
http://www.doc-h.demon.co.uk/mrbenn.wav
Sounds like: The Brighouse and Rastrick brass band on *good* ecstacy.

Rainbow
http://www.misenus.demon.co.uk/sounds/rainbow.ra
Sounds like: An Arran sweater stomping on your face forever.

Rhubarb And Custard
http://www.mindspring.com/~paulwalker/roobarb.wav
Sounds like: Two words. Daft and Punk.

Vision On
http://www.mindspring.com/ paulwalker/vision.wav
Sounds like: The next *Portishead* album. Possibly.

Monkey: ©BBC Rentaghost: ©BBC The Wombles: Scope Features Pipkins: Scope Features

on finding some more Bod stuff, although it's very hard to come by. Specifically, I'm after a picture of him, so if anyone can help... I also want to find pictures of Brian Cant and Johnny Ball – especially because he's Zoe Ball's Dad and she has so many pages dedicated to her. It's about time his talent was recognised."

But if all these telly sites have such completist ambitions, surely the day will come when everything ever is on-line? With the Web to answer all our whims, nostalgia will be a thing of the past, pub conversations will return to that *Spice Girl* question and Danny Baker will be out of a job.

Andrew Wiseman, Webmaster for 625 Television Room **(http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~bandc/a.wiseman/625/index.htm)**, disagrees. "The Internet encourages nostalgia," declares Wiseman. "It gives people access to images from their childhood that they'd never see again otherwise. It's ideal for finding out the answers to questions such as the name of Hong Kong Phooey's cat.

"The Web is excellent for this kind of stuff because it's

Squog flip blopsquit?
http://www.know.demon.co.uk/clangers/snd/clangers.au

Top Ten Kids TV Sites

Ah, you can almost smell the Space Dust... Connect's retro box-staring selection, in no particular order...

an immediate medium. 20-somethings previously had to wait for fellow 20-somethings to get jobs in TV in order to see *Captain Scarlet* again. It's even happening in Hollywood with all the TV shows being remade into films. But the Web covers it now and the Web covers it all. Wait for the Hollywood remake of *Pipkins* and you'll be waiting a helluva long time. But search for it on-line and it's there."

Indeed it is, and while some pages are nothing more than a grainy photo and a half-remembered catch phrase, others are jaw-dropping multimediafests that transport you back to the days of Cresta and Giant Haystacks. "Broop-do-do!" chirps Keyop on the alarmingly completist *Battle Of The Planets* site **(http://www.vacuform.com/Gatchaman/)**. "Ay-yi-yi-ii!" whines Monkey **(http://www.csc.liv.ac.uk/~u5ms/monkey/)** before the wisdom of Tripitaka is painstakingly transcribed. "Wooooo wooo wooo!" jauntily whistles Tiny Clanger **(http://www.know.demon.co.uk/clangers/)** to his pal Soup Dragon

1 Mr Benn

http://www.doc-h.demon.co.uk/benn.htm

"Keep the feather as a souvenir, sir..." Quintessentially English and mad as badgers, Festive Road's most famous resident gets the full-on cybertreatment. And yes, of course you can down-load THAT tune.

2 Pingu

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/~nmacs/pingu.html

He cooks fish in an igloo. He digs opera. He goes "meek meek". He is the almighty Pingu and his legion of postgraduate admirers have created a poetry-packed ice palace most worthy of his plasticine presence.

3 Trumptonshire

http://www.bbc.co.uk/evans

The Windy Miller song in full, plus specially recorded sound clips from the mouth of Brian Cant. Brian Cant! Brian bloody Cant!!!

4 The Clangers

http://www.know.demon.co.uk/clangers/

The winsome appeal of the cosmic sock puppets lives on with memory-jogging audio files, snapshots of the mighty Soup Dragon and, most bizarrely, Clangers knitting patterns. You heard us... Knitting patterns.

5 Charlie Says...

http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~bandc/a.wiseman/625/pifs.htm

There is forever a corner of The Web where Jo and Petunia are ignoring the Country Code, Mike can swim like a fish and Charley still screeches like that old Miaow Mix advert.

6 Rentaghost

http://www.claypole.demon.co.uk/

Mr Claypole: amusingly goateed japester or gibbering loon? You decide as the spectral slapstick of Hazel McWitch, Mr Meeker and Nadia Popov is re-enacted on-line, multimedia styley.

7 Rainbow

http://www.misenus.demon.co.uk/rainbow.htm

Strutting his stuffing like a carpet-covered dictator, Zippy IS the Bungle-baiting overlord of children's TV, we are his disciples and this is festooned with images, gags and sound samples of his gobshiteness.

8 Bagpuss

http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/1011/bagpuss.html

The winsome alternative to the neon madness of *Rainbow*, Bagpuss on-line is still "just an old, saggy cloth cat and loose at the seams". But Emily still loves him. Sniff.

9 Dangermouse

http://www.dangermouse.org/index.html

The epic battle between Eyepatchmouse and Baron Silas Greenback continues with all the brain-jogging piccies and sounds you could ever want. Penfold? Shush...

10 The Wombles

http://www.powerup.com.au/~twalden/womble.html

Fluffsome enviro-fascists or just puppets with a penchant for elm-bark pie? The Wombles waddle Webwards with songs, episode guides and, most disturbingly, the lyrics to 'Super Womble'.

Big Kids' Quiz

Summon up that squealing nipper from the back of your brain, nab a crayon and fill in them flashbacks...

1. Who hosted the kids' film show, *Clapperboard?*

2. What was the name of Hong Kong Phooey's cat?

3. Which Granada show not only featured the puppets Humphrey Cushion and Dusty Mop but also Alma from *Coronation Street?*

4. What year did *Tiswas* start?

5. What was the name of Bod's auntie?

6. What was the name of the cabin boy in Captain Pugwash?

7. Pugh, Pugh, Barney McGrew, Cuthbert, Dibble and...?

8. What did the mice in Bagpuss used to sing?

9. What was the name of Captain Caveman's saucy female companions?

10. *Runaround* ran for 13 series from 1975 to 1981, and was presented by Mike Reid except for two series during 1977. Who hosted these?

Answers with Johnny Morris and Playschool's cockatoo...
1. Chris Kelly 2. Spot 3. *Hickory House* 4. 1974 5. Flo 6. Tom. Not Roger Tom... 7. Grubb 8. "We will fix it, we will fix it..." 9. The Teen Angels 10. Leslie Crowther and Stan Boardman respectively.

before a knitting pattern (yes, really) for the hessian aliens down-loads... Thanks to the on-line never-never land of the Net, there's no fear of ever having to grow up. And want to hear something else? If this is how it is after only a year, just imagine what it's going to be like in 1998.

"Some things will never come back," laments Paul Walker. "Like the original *Magic Roundabout* with all its references to drugs. But I don't see the Internet ending nostalgia; just making it easier to be nostalgic. I have a friend who works in television who knows *everything* there is to know about these shows. He's planning to contribute stuff from the early days of the Children's BBC Broom Cupboard."

No rest till Trumpton, eh? "Obsession is good. It's probably best to keep obsessive people on the Net and off the streets," agrees Andrew Wiseman. "But I don't think it's really an obsession; merely a progression from reminiscing in the pub. Childhood nostalgia is a happy experience. We all do it. We all think stuff was so much better then."

And as Mighty Anthropomorphic Ninja Blokes backflip their way across your TV screen, you can do naught but agree. Hell, stuff *was* better back then. Who cares if your judgement is clouded by the rose-tinted mists of nostalgia? I have *Animal Magic* beatifically tinkling out of my speakers, a picture of Basil Brush as a start-up screen and the sweet promise of a *Mary, Mungo And Midge* site in the very near future. Yes, I am Man, I am Internet and I am content... Now will someone code up a Pob home page?

Rainbow: Scope Features Basil Brush: Scope Features Animal Magic: ©BBC

Jingle Hell

Regional of television and wobbly of trumpet, tune your ears back into the real sounds of the suburbs – it's TV ident theme time! (This page is not available in Northern Ireland.)

Boom! Boom!
http://www.flicks.com/~martin/basil_brush/bint.wav

http://www.beach.demon.co.uk/jingles/lwt1.avi
And now on
LWT: *Dempsey & Makepeace*
Random Logo Fact: The toothpaste used to animate the L, W and T was withdrawn from shop shelves in 1979 when chemists discovered that it caused mouth plague.

http://www.beach.demon.co.uk/jingles/anglia.wav
And now on
Anglia: *Sale Of The Century*
Random Logo Fact: The infamous Knight Of Norwich on which the logo is based is said to haunt the hair of Anglian weathermen.

http://www.beach.demon.co.uk/jingles/atv.wav
And now on
ATV: *Oh No, It's Selwyn Frogett*

Random Logo Fact: Conspiracy theorists from the Midlands still assert that the two circles forming the ATV graphic were inspired by the lovely eyes of a pet alien owned by controversial channel honcho Lew Grade.

http://www.beach.demon.co.uk/jingles/thames.wav
And now on
Thames: *The Sweeney*
Random Logo Fact: St Paul's Cathedral, The Houses of Parliament and Tower Bridge are all situated "on" the Thames – if it weren't for this fact, the logo simply would not exist.

http://www.beach.demon.co.uk/jingles/htv.wav
And now on
HTV: *Painting With Nancy*
Random Logo Fact: From design roughs to final broadcastable image, the HTV logo took an amazing five minutes to create. How Did They Do That? A colouring pencil and a bottle of gin.

Trivia

UM... IT'S... ER... PASS: **ROBIN ASKEW**
Robin_Askew@msn.com

POP SCENE

Name: Freddy And Steve's Music Trivia Quiz
What is it? A pop trivia quiz hard enough to make Mark Lamarr's quiff weep.
Where you'll find it: http://www.ayles.demon.co.uk/
What's it like? No flashy graphics, bells or whistles here. Just a fiendishly difficult interactive pop quiz "for connoisseurs of fine music from Do-Wop to BritPop". If you think you know which act recently covered Peter Frampton's 'Baby I Love Your Way' or which song title links Elvis Costello and *The Kids From Fame*, bash in your answers in the spaces provided, e-mail them off and wait to see just how badly you've done. Each month brings 20 new, fiendishly cunning questions and there's a full archive of previous quizzes with answers to sharpen your intellect on.

"HELLO, SIR!"

Upside: Wrap yourself up in a smug cocoon of superiority if you know *any* of the answers.
Downside: You can win... Absolutely bugger all. And there's a really alarming picture of Steve with the young Billy Idol (then known as Bill Broad, triv fans!) taken in 1976.
Typical quote: "John Deutschendorf (real name) has his second US hit with this song in 1973."
Overall: ★★★★

YOU TALKIN' TO ME?

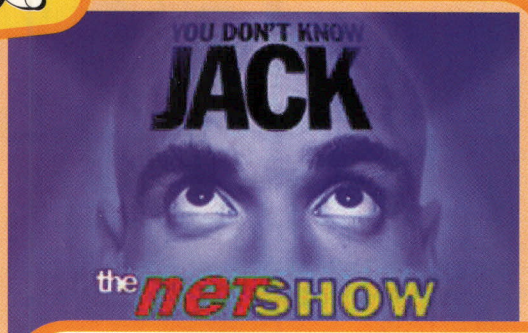
Name: Movie Quotes
What is it? Quotes from movies, funnily enough.
Where you'll find it: http://www.uk.imdb.com/Sections/Quotes/Index/
What's it like? You're in the pub having this really silly, drunken conversation with some gooner who reckons he can quote verbatim from every scene in *Trainspotting*. You know he's wrong, but how can you prove it? Well, you could slap the video on and laboriously locate the appropriate scene, by which time everybody will have forgotten your stupid argument. Or you could check it out on this awesomely detailed archive of quotes from the International Movie Database. All you have to do is select the film of your choice from an alphabetical index, click on the title, and up come all the most memorable pieces of dialogue. Magic!
Upside: Includes almost all of *Pulp Fiction*, as you'd expect. And Frank Drebin's "Nice beaver!" quote from *Naked Gun*.
Downside: Only two quotes from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. And no *Deliverance!* "Squeal like a pig..."
Typical quote: "Remember, the children can't praise the Lord if they've got genitals in their mouths." *Nudist Colony Of The Dead*, 1991.
Overall: ★★★★

JUST TELL ME THE ANSWER, DAMMIT!

Name: MentalFloss
What is it? An interactive trivia quiz WITH PRIZES!
Where you'll find it: http://www.riddler.com/freegames/mental/bin/init_mental.cgi
What's it like? Choose from six categories for the interactive Mental Floss Lite challenge and up come ten moderately cranium-crushing questions. Bash your answers to each in the little box, click on the button, and seconds later you'll know whether you got it right or wrong. The quizzes don't come with any membership obligations, but you have to register and give your e-mail address if you want to access the other stuff on site.
Upside: Instant gratification if you're a swot.
Downside: If you get a question wrong, the blasted thing doesn't bother telling you the right answer.
Typical quote: "Stanley Kauffman called it 'a milestone in American film history'. What 1967 film includes the line, 'Mrs Robinson, if you don't mind me saying so, this conversation is getting a little strange'?" I know! I know!
Overall: ★★★

HotSpot!

Name: You Don't Know Jack
What is it? A Web version of the CD-ROM quiz game for trivia anoraks.
Where you'll find it: http://www.bezerk.com
What's it like? An addictive, interactive trivia assault, with wiseass interjections every time you screw up. Prepare to be confronted with such noggin-busters as "Just how many times is blood thicker than water?" and the occasional totally surreal poser that's clearly been devised by people who are on something Don't stare at those pretty graphics and animations too long or listen to all that background chatter, mind, or you'll miss the answer deadline and find yourself $3,000 down in imaginary cash. Hell, I *hope* it's imaginary cash...
Upside: Twice weekly quizzes.
Downside: Too many ads and it takes 20 minutes to download the start-up file.
Typical quote: "If Herbie had a green makeover and converted to non-fossil fuels, which of the following herbs could he use?"



"I *PRETENDED* NOT TO KNOW..."

Savour this random selection of brain-mincing trivia posers from the You Don't Know Jack Web site.

Q1 **Instead of singing a lullaby to his son, Michael Jackson sings a song by a pop star who shares his son's name. What would he most likely sing?**
a) Prince's 'Baby I'm a Star'
b) Sting's 'Lullaby For a Anxious Child'
c) Elvis's 'That's Alright Mama'

Q2 **Because they have matching deformities, all of the following characters would be able to share the same custom-tailored tuxedo jacket except for whom?**
a) Captain Ahab from Melville's *Moby Dick*
b) Shakespeare's *Richard III*
c) Quasimodo
d) Punch of Punch and Judy

Q3 **Because it's the most dense, which planet would spend the most time sitting in the corner wearing a dunce cap at planet school?**
a) Jupiter
b) Earth
c) Mars
d) Saturn

Answers

Q1. The King of Pop named his kid Prince – as if he needed something else to put him into psychotherapy.

Q2. Ahab's jacket would look normal. He doesn't have a hump like the rest, but he's got a peg leg so he might want to get his trousers tailored a little.

Q3. Earth.

ALRIGHT BRAIN, YOU DON'T LIKE ME...

Name: The Simpsons
What is it? A quiz devoted to America's most subversive, yellow-hued dysfunctional family.
Where you'll find it: http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/7328/s00.htm
What's it like? A richly illustrated, multiple choice quiz aimed at *Simpsons* experts. Don't even think about trying it unless you know who shot Mr Burns, 'cos that's the first question. You'll also need to know Marge's maiden name and which sector of the power plant Homer works in.
Upside: The chance to indulge your *Simpsons* obsession.
Downside: If you get an answer wrong, it sends you right back to question one. Doh!
Typical quote: "Who won the Employee Of The Month Award, which Homer thought he deserved?" Think carefully now...
Overall: ★★★

Brains win prizes: plough your mind field and win some trinkets at (durr, guess) Riddler.com.
Riddler
www.riddler.com

Movies

GOING ON ABOUT FILMS: **NIGEL FLOYD**
nfloyd@technoir.win-uk.net

BATMANIA

Name: Batman And Robin
What is it? A shiny on-line guide to the fourth instalment in the ever-evolving *Batman* series.
Where you'll find it: http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/square/ac620/batman4.htm
What's it like? John Galley's sleekly-designed site serves as a neat alternative to the official Warner Bros home page. A fan-oriented Batfest, it delivers solid information and glossy photographs on all the protagonists. Read about George "Dr Ross" Clooney's metamorphosis from surgical gown to rubber suit, fellow newcomer Alicia Silverstone's Batgirl, and the latest batch of villains, cold-blooded Mr Freeze (Arnold Schwarzenegger) and Poison Ivy (Uma Thurman).
Upside: Long on style and brimming with enthusiasm.
Downside: *Batman Forever* was a bombastic mess – will Joel Schumacher's second effort follow painful suit?
Typical quote: "I had my eye on George for a long time. Every time I saw a picture of him in the paper I used to take my black Magic Marker and draw the Batman mask on him." Director Schumacher on his casting of George Clooney.
Overall: ★★★★

Also available on page 14...

THREATENED SPECIES

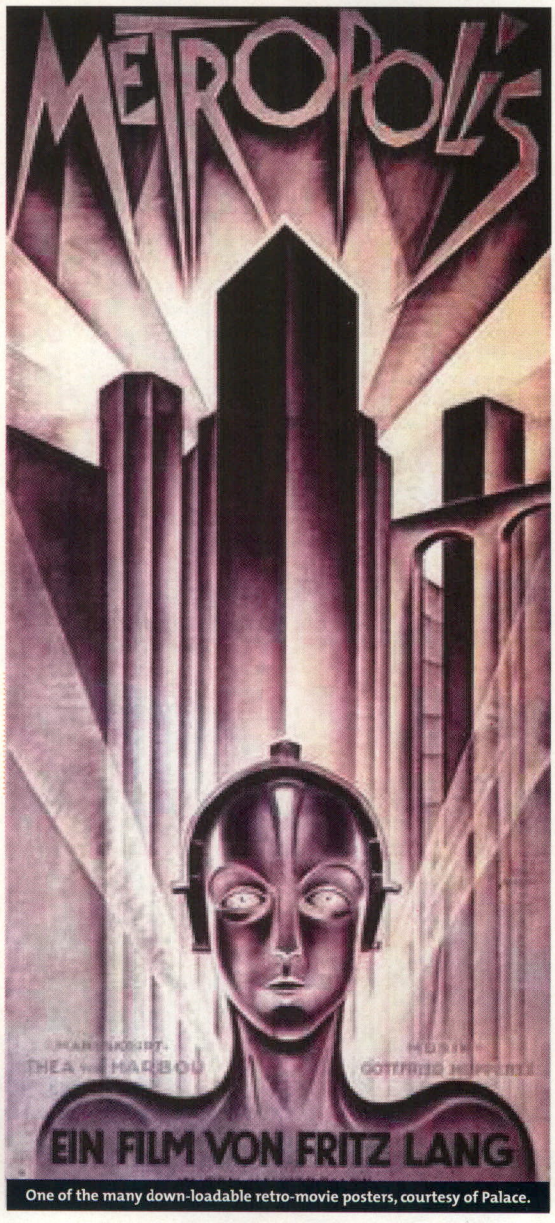
Name: Film Threat On-Line
What is it? A stripped-down, virtual version of the iconoclastic American film mag.
Where you'll find it: http://www.filmthreat.com/
What's it like? Independent in attitude and uncompromising in its opinions, Film Threat takes an oblique perspective on Hollywood, favouring renegade directors like Oliver Stone over mainstream conformists like Steven Spielberg. As a result, you can't get it on the newsstand and will have to subscribe, but take a peek at this on-line shrine to see what you're missing. You'll find ultra-opinionated reviews and brief extracts from interviews with the likes of weirdmeister David Lynch and writer/director/actor Billy Bob Thornton, whose *Slingblade* won this year's Best Original Screenplay Oscar.
Upside: Appetite-whetting extracts give a flavour of what's on offer in the printed version.
Downside: Some of the more anecdotal "reviews" border on the juvenile.
Typical quote: "David Lynch is not for everybody. You know that. I know that. His new film, *Lost Highway*, will send the average filmgoer screaming for the exit signs. Collaborating again with writer Barry Gifford, Lynch has set out once again to shake up the status quo, this time using LA as the setting."
Overall: ★★★★

CLASSIC CELLULOID

Name: Palace
What is it? An informed celebration of the Golden Era of Hollywood.
Where you'll find it: http://www.scruz.net/~mmills/palace/
What's it like? Elegantly designed and lovingly maintained, Michael Mills's page is one of the precious few movie sites dedicated to classic Hollywood cinema. Alongside illustrated essays on subjects such as 'B' movies and the representation of black Americans in Hollywood films, there are poster images, evocative star portraits and sound files. What might have been an excuse for mere nostalgic wallowing is transformed by Mills's intelligence and affection for this genre into an exceptional on-line resource.
Upside: A welcome reminder that there was cinema before *Reservoir Dogs*.
Downside: If you only read *Empire*, this may come as something of a shock.
Typical quote: "This space is maintained for proper fans of Hollywood's Golden Era and the great Classic Films."
Overall: ★★★★

QUIET, PLEASE

Name: Librarians in the Movies: An Annotated Filmography
What is it? An exhaustive, categorised list of films featuring librarians.
Where you'll find it: http://library.lib.binghamton.edu/staff/mraish/movies/introduction.html
What's it like? Martin Raish obviously thinks of himself as a far from typical librarian. He describes his text-heavy on-line resource as, "an ongoing attempt to expand our collective memory, to find a more comprehensive and defensible basis for our acceptance or rejection of the 'typical movie librarian' – whatever we think he or she is." Now, does that sound like a "typical librarian"?
Upside: Illustrates by example the most unique appeal of the male librarian.
Downside: Not one photo of a female librarian with her hair in a bun, subtly sexy specs and just a hint of cleavage. (Only joking.)
Typical quote: "The 'librarian



One of the many down-loadable retro-movie posters, courtesy of Palace.

stereotype' has long been the focus of articles, letters, workshops, conversations, and possibly even dreams and nightmares." Really?
Overall: ★★★

NERDS R US

Name: rec.arts.movies.current-films
What is it? A newsgroup dedicated to current, mostly mainstream films.
Where you'll find it: Usenet: rec.arts.movies.current-films
What's it like? A busy, pointless free-for-all of half-baked rumours, ill-informed opinions and Been-There-Seen-It-Trashed-It stupidity. So much so, that you wonder why the few intelligent posters bother to cast their pearls before such nerdy, anally-retentive swine. The two major obsessions doing the rounds here are speculating on a movie's potential box-office takings and trashing movies before they've been released, shot, written, or even given a name. Tarantino's latest, *Jackie Brown*, was dismissed on account of its title.
Upside: You don't have to subscribe to it.
Downside: If you do, you'll spend hours sorting the wheat from the chaff – use an off-line news reader like Free Agent.
Typical quote: "What is the buzz on *Volcano?* How much do you think it'll make this opening weekend?"
Overall: ★

SOUR GRAPES

Name: Movie Juice
What is it? A satirical attempt to, "deconstruct the bullshit that is Hollywood".
Where you'll find it: http://www.moviejuice.com/
What's it like? Commentary with an edge and reviews with attitude take Tinseltown to task and feed its movies through the mincer. Although he exaggerates for effect, Mark Ramsey's tongue is planted firmly in his cheek. Take, for instance, his caustic observations on *Clerks* director Kevin Smith's new movie: *"Chasing Amy* is an 'Independent' film with a capital 'I' as in, 'I can't believe I wasted $7 bucks on this movie'. Or, 'I would buy dinner with my credit card, but I just used it to finance my last feature'." Ramsey also provides some shrewd commentary on comedienne Ellen DeGenera's disingenuous coming out episode – "Lesbian hero? Or marketing queen?".
Upside: Tart, topical and thought provoking.
Downside: Infantile asides occasionally lower the tone.
Typical quote: "Piercing the nipple of Tinseltown's augmented breast."
Overall: ★★★★

COOL HAND LUC

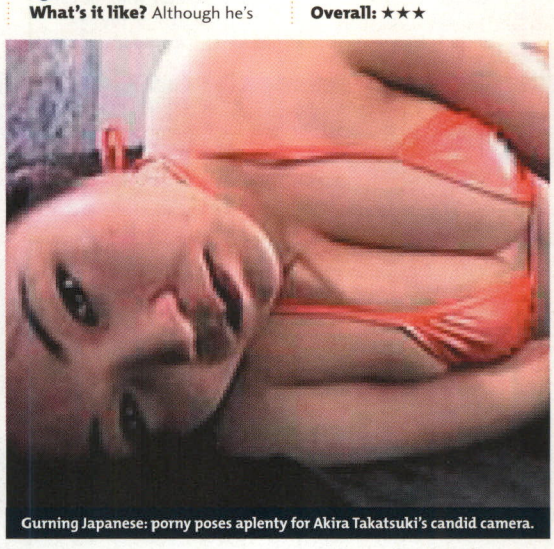
Name: Luc Besson Mailing List
What is it? Chew the cud with fellow fans of French film director Luc Besson.
Where you'll find it: Send an e-mail with "subscribe besson [your e-mail address]" in the message body to Majordomo@buffnet4.buffnet.net
What's it like? When French director Luc Besson's stunning sci-fi movie, *The Fifth Element*, is released on June 13th, you may find this focused mailing list preferable to the unmoderated drivel that inevitably appears in the larger Usenet newsgroups. The natives are both friendly and knowledgeable, although there's an unfortunate tendency to indulge in arcane discussions about laser disc versions with extra scenes.
Upside: Subscribers are spread across the globe, making this a good opportunity to see how Besson's work is perceived in other climes.
Downside: The inevitable degree of nitpicking obsessiveness you'll encounter.
Typical quote: "I've just heard that Luc Besson is directing a remake of Walter Hill's 1978 movie *The Driver*. There any truth in this?"
Overall: ★★★

TALKING HEADS

Name: Loquacious Noggins
What is it? To quote the resident headcase, John Tebbutt, this is "a non-comprehensive list of feature films in which at least one line of INTELLIGIBLE dialogue is spoken by a severed head."
Where you'll find it: http://www.telusplanet.net/public/whitedm/noggins.htm
What's it like? It's heads down for a postmortem on movies in which bonces bereft of bodies bespeak themselves with the help of RealAudio. Who can forget the tender words spoken by the severed head of Ash's girlfriend in *Evil Dead II?* Or the decapitated murder victim in Dario Argento's *Trauma*, whose head tries to whisper the murderer's name into the hero's ear? This could be a classic.
Upside: I laughed my head off.
Downside: It carried on talking.
Typical quote: "Oh, I remember you. You threw up on me." A decapitated zombie in Michele Soavi's mirthfully morbid Dellamorte Dellamore.
Overall: ★★★

NIPPON PORN

Name: From Porno Video Director: Diary Of Akira Takatsuki
What is it? A blow-by-blow account of Mr Takatsuki's experiences as an amateur porn video maker.
Where you'll find it: http://www.beKKOAME.OR.JP/~gas/index1-e.html
What's it like? Although he's directed such memorably entitled sex videos as *The Big Busty Bondage Vol 1, Wives Out of Control at 25:00 – Chapter 6* and *Nana Yuzuki In SM Training*, there's something oddly naive about Mr Takatsuki's site. The pictures are relatively explicit, with plenty of well-endowed young ladies plastered across the pages, but the descriptions of how his amateur videos were shot ingenuously reveal the innate ludicrousness of simulated sex play.
Upside: Mr Takatsuki's disarming honesty.
Downside: Less stimulating (though more interesting) than you might imagine.
Typical quote: *"The Bomber Girl Volume 3* was the best received among foreigners... *Volume 4* features a bomber girl (office worker) I got through a telephone message service. She wasn't so sure about her own bra size, and the scene where we went shopping for a bra together was particularly well received."
Overall: ★★★


Gurning Japanese: porny poses aplenty for Akira Takatsuki's candid camera.

HotSpot!

Name: Ain't It Cool News
What is it? An entertaining but invariably unreliable mix of rumour, gossip and speculation about Hollywood movies currently in production or development.
Where you'll find it: http://www.aint-it-cool-news.com/
What's it like? Proud winner of an alt.nerd.obsessive award, Texan film fan Harry Knowles has channelled his fixation into his Web site. Knowles has even attained on-line cult celebrity status, with an endorsement from Quentin Tarantino and alleged tip-offs from anonymous industry insiders. Creature designs from Paul Verhoeven's *Starship Troopers* appeared on the site briefly, scripts for upcoming movies get précised, and there are reports from internal studio screenings of hotly-anticipated movies.
Upside: Upfront dope, and plenty of it.
Downside: The grotesque background featuring the wispy-bearded nerdster himself.
Typical quote: "Harry, you're like the Wolf Blitzer of the Internet." The presumably admiring words of Quentin Tarantino. But who the hell is the Wolf Blitzer?

SPIES R US

If you're not content with reading Harry's scoops, you can become a fully paid-up member of his World Wide Geek Network: "First, you have to qualify. You must provide some sort of Cooool News, a picture of yourself, vital info (optional), signature, and $7.50. This will cover [the] creation of your SPY ID and postage. You will be given your own personal laminated photo SPY ID with your very own spy number." It's kind of a reverse-cool thing? Or maybe not.

Music

LIQUID SWORDS: **MIKE GOLDSMITH**
mgoldsmith@futurenet.co.uk

THE END OF SNIVILLISATION

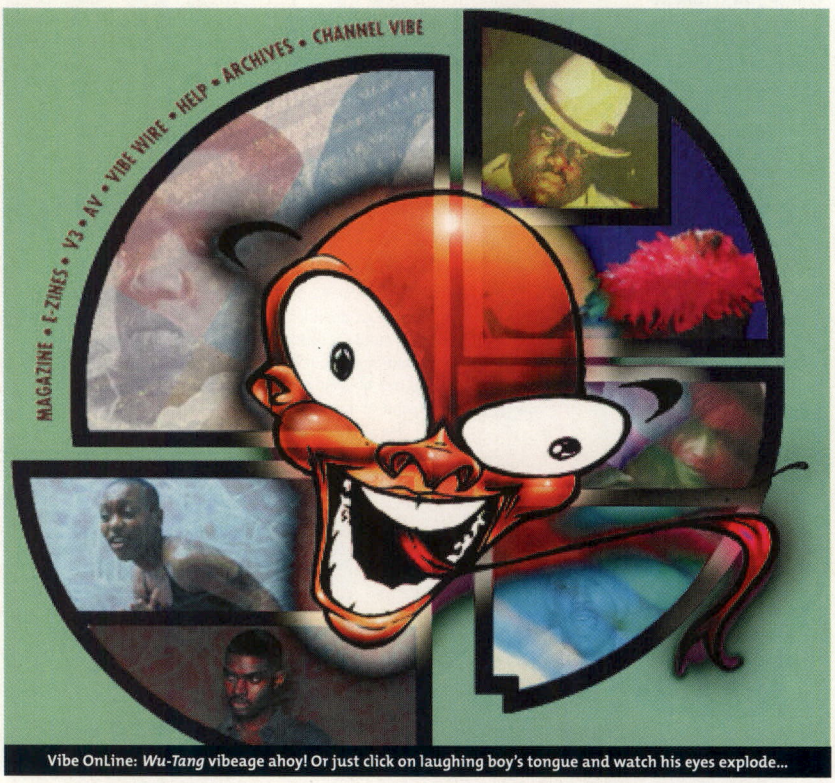
Name: Orbital
What is it? Everyone's favourite baldy electro-boffins go cyber.
Where you'll find it: http://www.rise.co.uk/orbital/
What's it like? Looking like the Mitchell brothers but sounding like a knees-up in a disused space station, the Hartnolls' robo-alchemy is tailor-made for the Net. Their Rise-designed site does them proud... Ish. Interviews, video clips and CD quality samples will moisten the fanboys but, given that anarcho-punk background, it's surprising that *Orbital* hasn't taken the chance to vent its political spleen. The result is a dispassionate site that perfectly matches the unsettling soundscapes of, say, 'The Box' EP. With such high standards elsewhere, you can't help but feel disappointed.
Upside: Pop 'In Sides' into your CD-ROM drive, down-load Voyager's CD Link software and, as if by magic, the site chooses the songs for you.
Downside: With a new album on the way, it's time for an HTML spring clean.
Typical quote: "There's a cheese grater on the screens now. And a pack of Enser cards for detecting telepathics. And an egg timer. And a metronome. And, wow, a CND logo. You know it all makes sense, don't you?" Um...
Overall: ★★★

BRYTER LAYTER

Name: The Nick Drake Files
What is it? The cheekbones of a god, the larynx of an angel and songs to (unfortunately) die for.
Where you'll find it: http://www.algonet.se/~iguana/DRAKE/DRAKE.html
What's it like? Although his life ended tragically at the tender age of 26, Nick Drake's introspective English folk songs have inspired everyone from *REM* to Paul Weller. This Web page is a studiously completist introduction to the singer-songwriter's sadly truncated career. Based around an exhaustive A to Z format, RealAudio clips of previously unavailable demos nestle alongside ultra-rare interviews. And as Drake's tragic last days are described by the site author with both authority and passion, you may even find that the spaceways of the Internet have reduced you to tears for the very first time. Sob.
Upside: More in-depth coverage than you'll find in any film or book on Drake.
Downside: One day, we'll run out of material to unearth.
Typical quote: "Everything should be black before one goes to bed, but that is surely the essence of the romantic."
Overall: ★★★★★

WA-AYE PUNKA!

Name: Kenickie Fried Chicken
What is it? The Indie *Spice Girls*, apparently. Except for the drummer, who's a bloke.
Where you'll find it: http://www2.bath.ac.uk/~bs4kmg/kenintro.html
What's it like? With the cut-and-paste spirit of the Net soaking up more and more of those 50p fanzines you can buy at *Bis* gigs, it's no surprise that Sunderland's foxy punksters have their own page. What *is* surprising is that someone's transcribed guitar tabs for the likes of 'Punka' and 'In Your Car'. Yes, it shows the devotion that indie-pop can inspire, but *Kenickie?* Guitar tabs?! Stick to the supersassy interviews, fact files and polls if you want to soak up that real *Byker-Grove*-goes-POP! chutzpah. Example? "People keep telling us to keep our feet on the ground. Why? Keep your feet on the ground and you'll just end up standing in dog shit." Bless 'em.
Upside: Funny man write funny Web site. Funny.
Downside: That a man called Godpants swims in these waters.
Typical quote: "Does the large gap between Johnny X's eyes signify he is of the criminal persuasion?" The *Kenickie* poll.
Overall: ★★★



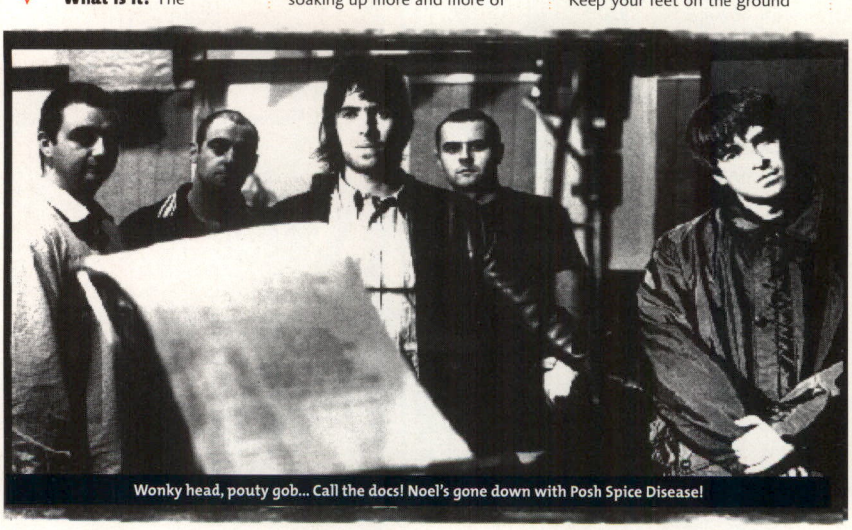
Vibe OnLine: *Wu-Tang* vibeage ahoy! Or just click on laughing boy's tongue and watch his eyes explode...

MAMA, WE HATE YOU

Name: Spice Girls! Kill! Kill! Kill!
What is it? The by-product of one too many, "Which one would you...?" conversations.
Where you'll find it: http://www.ziplink.net/~joe_len/enter.html
What's it like? Look everyone, a humourless man! Fair enough, The Spicy Ones are hardly saviours of the musical universe, but there's really no need to get so upset about it. The site's entire critique revolves around pointing out that "they can't sing", their "image is completely created by a boardroom of executives" and, more revealingly still, "they're not even that attractive"... Searing socio-political insight on the state of modern pop this most certainly ain't and only the alleged Satanism of Ginger Spice saves it from complete redundancy.
Upside: Follow the link to Urban 75's admittedly gigglesome Slap A Spice Shockwave game (http://194.112.40.4/Urban75/ main.html).
Downside: *"The Spice Girls* have absolutely nothing but image..." GO AWAY!
Typical quote: "The other night I had a dream that *The Spice Girls* were clones and à la *Blade Runner*. I had been chosen to hunt them down."
Overall: ★★

RED, WHITE AND BLUETONES

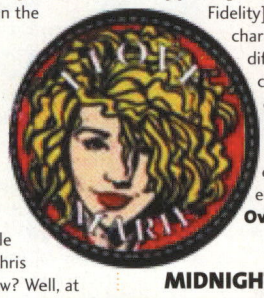
Name: The Supersonic Guide
What is it? If it's from Blighty, owns a fringe and jangles, you'll find it here.
Where you'll find it: http://www.supersonic.demon.co.uk/
What's it like? Just when you thought you'd seen it all... Taking in everyone from the *Ash* babies to the late unlamented *Wonder Stuff*, The Supersonic Guide is a multistorey car park for all vehicles Britpop. *Sleeper, Mansun, Black Grape*... Simply organised, with no duff links,


Wonky head, pouty gob... Call the docs! Noel's gone down with Posh Spice Disease!

this is a cross between Yahoo! and last week's *NME*. It's just a shame that there's bugger all content. Nevertheless, there is the odd surprise in store – some disturbed individual is *still* coding up a *Del Amitri* fan page. As we said, just when you thought you'd seen it all...
Upside: 1997 and British music is the funkiest on the planet!
Downside: But the only dance music that gets a look in here is of the studenty *Chemicals/ Prodigy/Zion Train* variety.
Typical quote: "Regularly updated, the Guide contains links to the sites of over 300 artists and record labels. This is the original guide to British music on the Internet – beware of poor imitations!"
Overall: ★★★

THE SECOND COMING (SLIGHT RETURN)

Name: The Seahorses
What is it? Truly, he is the resurrection...
Where you'll find it: http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~dsada/seahorse/seahorse.html
What's it like? With Mani off partying with *Primal Scream* and Ian Brown scaring small children with his atonal whinings, it's left to John Squire to fan the patchouli-flecked flames of the late *Stone Roses*. His *Zep*-alike debut single 'Love Is The Law' did just that and this site is guaranteed to document *The Seahorses'* inevitable rise to the top of Chris Evans's CD pile. How? Well, at the time of writing, there's not a single *Seahorses* record in the shops, yet David Sada's effervescent page is stuffed with bootleg track listings, lyrics and even scanned-in autographs. The countdown to the main stage at Glastonbury surely begins here.
Upside: Such dedication, and all for our benefit.
Downside: Squire still wears that tank top.
Typical quote: "Strap-on-Sally chased us down the alley/We feared for our behinds/*Oasis* was a shop with shoes so hot/They were sure to blow your mind..."
Overall: ★★★

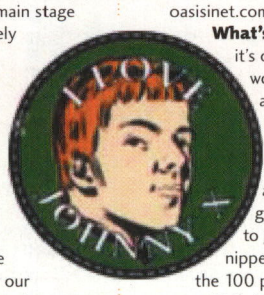


FEVER PITCHED

Name: High Fidelity
What is it? A tribute to the 30-nothing novel that should've been called *Trainspotting*.
Where you'll find it: http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/5736/
What's it like? According to Harry Enfield, *High Fidelity* is the novel to make women pity rather than hate us pathetic males. The relentless barrage of Top Five lists that pervades Nick Hornby's novel now gets its on-line equivalent with this sparse Web page. The site author has dutifully transcribed Best Of '96 charts from the UK press, so far covering movies and music, but with the intention to include sport and TV. It's the Top 100 from newsgroup rec.music, however, that proves the most surprising. *No Doubt* at Number One? *Bush* at Number Seven? *Ash* only at Number 51?! And you wonder why people get so wound up by the current state of Usenet.
Upside: It *could* grow into something very bookmarkable.
Downside: For a more encyclopaedic guide to everything ever, try Julian's Rock Lists (http://www.pncl.co.uk/subs/julianw/list.html).
Typical quote: "[High Fidelity] will feature charts by me, different kinds of charts, links to other charts and the chance to vote for charts!" Viva eclecticism...
Overall: ★★

MIDNIGHT AT THE...

Name: The Official Oasis Home Page
What is it? Bonehead, Guigsy, Alan-y and a couple of others we've forgotten...
Where you'll find it: http://www.oasisinet.com
What's it like? And it's official: *Oasis* won. *Blur* has absconded into lo-fi, while 'Morning Glory' sold about four gazillion copies to grannies and nippers alike. And if the 100 plus fan sites you'll find on this links page are anything to go by, *Oasis* has conquered the Internet as well. A shame then that this official page doesn't add anything you can't find on the host of other on-line *Oasis* shrines. Sure, it has all the lyrics, clips and official background info you could want, but, as the excellent *Radiohead* (http://www.radiohead.co.uk/) and *Ash* (http://www.iol.ie/~verve/ash.html) sites demonstrate, official doesn't always have to mean dull.
Upside: Couldn't make Loch Lomond? There are video clips and RealAudio rantings to ease your agony.
Downside: Loch Lomond aside, there's nothing here you couldn't learn from last week's music weeklies. How about some Net exclusives?
Typical quote: "Liam Gallagher married fiancée Patsy Kensit this morning at 8.30am in a private ceremony at Marylebone Registry Office, London. The couple are extremely happy, and very pleased that they've finally been able to tie the knot without any intrusions."
Overall: ★★★

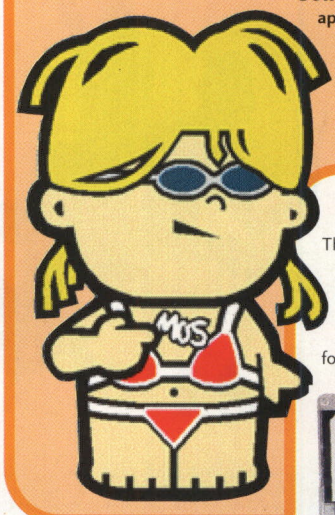


INTERNET CONNECTIONS AIN'T NUTHING TA F' WIT

Name: Vibe OnLine
What is it? A cyber-replication of the Yankee hip hop magazine.
Where you'll find it: http://www.vibe.com/VibeOnline!.html
What's it like? With the recent deaths of Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls, hip hop's internal feuds have dominated the Internet's rap forums. But with *Wu-Tang Clan's* impending return, it's time to get back to the music and Vibe OnLine is the perfect place to start. Want the latest video for Foxy Brown? Need the inside gen on the *Redman* album? Fancy a taster of those features on black porn or Me'Shell NdegéOcello before you buy the mag? Vibe OnLine's got the lot – clued-up writing, acres of cool photography and a multimedia archive bigger than LL Cool J's trousers. It's sussed, sassy, and any self-respecting home page boy should bookmark it NOW.
Upside: Comic strips, African studies, clips from the *VIBE* TV show... That hit list continues.
Downside: A trip to The Totally Unofficial Rap Dictionary (http://www.sci.kun.nl/thalia/rapdict/) could be in order.
Typical quote: "I remember him dancing with this woman in a wheelchair for four hours when everybody else was drinking and partying. That's how I knew the man." Hip hop main mover Russell Simmons on the late Tupac.
Overall: ★★★★★

HotSpot!

Name: Ministry Of Sound
What is it? A ground-breaking venue, a club tour, a record label and NOW a Web site.
Where you'll find it: http://www.ministry-of-sound.com/
What's it like? Ministry Of Sound's quest for global domination has finally reached the on-line frontier and is dressed to impress. Bizarrely, Mick Jagger appears in the on-line photo album of the Ministry's Fifth Birthday shindig, but thereafter the guest list gets a touch more exclusive. Sound files from trance heavyweight Carl Craig, interviews with latino funkateers *Masters At Work*, and a soon-to-arrive VRML model of the venue itself are just a few of the hot features on offer. There's even a news 'n' flyers mailing list that promises "loads of other bits we haven't even thought of yet". Looks like the Ministry's next countrywide tour should be coming to a browser near you.
Upside: Politics in dance music shocker! The Use Your Vote section admirably builds on Ministry Of Sound's 1996 media campaign.
Downside: This is possibly the only time one of those MIDI applets would've been appreciated.
Typical quote: "If you're a boxer, you want to fight at the Royal Albert hall. If you're a footballer, you want to step out at Wembley. Well, if you're a DJ, the place to scratch is at Ministry Of Sound." The words of Nigel Benn, strangely enough.



HANG THE DJ?

The grooviest feature on the Ministry Of Sound site is the Members Only area. Log on, listen to a bunch of MIDI file demos and, with the aid of an on-line questionnaire, you get to decide whether the bands in question are the next *Daft Punk* or just plain daft. Here are some of the delights we found lurking in the DJ box...

Artist: Da Cuban Heels
Track: 'Demo'
Verdict: Techno house-ish stuff like what they play dahn the Ministry.

Artist: Jay/Alex
Track: 'Love Bomb Baby'
Verdict: Gloria Estefan in a fluffy bra and hotpants. Those *TOTP* podiums await...

Artist: KJ
Track: 'Just Had Enough'
Verdict: A happy house stompalong straight from a Ritzy's near you.

Artist: Hyrule
Track: 'Random'
Verdict: Beginning – Josh Wink. Ending – 'BPM'. You know. ITV. 3am. *You know...*

Telly

LOUNGING LIZARD: **GIL GILLESPIE**
Gillespie@aol.com

KETCHUPPED

Name: The Girlie Show
What is it? Slugs, snails and self-conscious tampon references for the ultra-modern minx.
Where you'll find it: http://www.channel4.com/entertainment/girlie_show/
What's it like? Pulling Wonderbra shapes on a predictable *Charlie's Angels* silhouette background, the *Girlie Show* presenters force-feed you pierced nipples, male strippers, male strippers with pierced nipples, Wankers Of The Week and oooh-so-very-dishy footballers, usually in urinals. It's feminism as Blu Tack on the bedroom wall. It's *The Word* without the bands. It's a long, long way from Tinita Tikaram. Backstage, the Überbabes pose for the camera, all sass and in-yer-face. Suddenly, Denise Van Outen seems talented and you look for someone to blame. Joan of Arc? Joan Armatrading?
Upside: Weekly updates from Spice Central.
Downside: This week Mel C outlines her poststructuralist approach to the work of Edith Piaf and Jamie Rednapp shows you his bum.
Typical quote: "Hunky chunk Paul Howard is a baker from Rotherham, S Yorks. Paul boasts a 44-inch waist and a mammoth 51-inch, C cup chest... "
Overall: ★★★

Lord forgive them, for they know not why they were allowed on television. Or the Internet.

CAPITAL FLASH

Name: Dave Matthew's And James Pimentel-Pinto's Unofficial Guide To The Professionals
What is it? A relentless high-speed pursuit of bickering boot-boy bobbies, Bodie and Doyle.
Where you'll find it: http://www.carnfort.u-net.com/Professionals/intro.htm
What's it like? Beneath the official logo and cheesy rendition of the theme tune is a menu of CI5 activity that goes beyond the call of even George Cowley's "Sir!". First, Bodie and Doyle are compared to every UK cop character since Dixon made a nuisance of himself on Dock Green. Then there are links to *Target, The Avengers, Shoestring* and more. Finally, every single episode from all five series comes with opinion, behind-the-scenes yelling, censorship problems, details of video availability, paperbacks and annuals, a complete list of the music used, an entire section on Capris, and a photo gallery that confirms what you already knew: Bodie is Steve McQueen and Doyle is Leo Sayer in a bad mood.
Upside: Rarer than Bodie without a bird, this guide to *The Professionals* hand-brakes the killa cockney coupling into an information wheelspin.
Downside: Lock-ups.
Typical quote: "The final episode of the first season has never been transmitted in the UK. 'Klansman' was a Clemens script about inner city racism."
Overall: ★★★★

So... Who's the Ugly Bloke now then, eh?

WHA' CHEW LOOKIN' AT?

Name: Soap Heaven '97
What is it? Nigel and Sanjay's '70s night via The Woolpack, Bayside Diner and La Luz.
Where you'll find it: http://www.geocities.com/Television City/2533/
What's it like? "It's great to see you've joined the party," bubbles Soap Heaven in welcome, as it beckons you back down the evolutionary ladder. This is the place to go when you know the name of Blossom Jackson's favourite omelette and want to share it with others. Help add froth to the bubbles, rumour to the gossip and credibility to the story about Seth Armstrong and Sam Dingle. But the real purpose of this sudsy Valhalla is the spoiler – the snitch-and-pass-it-on exposé of plot secrets, show-leavers and well-I-never-dids. Go on, you know you really want to.
Upside: Dr Legg is to hold Krautrock evenings at The Cobra every other Thursday.
Downside: Five nights a week plus the weekend omnibuses and a seven-day tabloid backup. You want *more?*
Typical quote: "Heavy rumours are rife in Elstree that Paul Bradley is dumping his role as downtrodden Nigel Bates. He is rumoured to wish to concentrate more on his music. Paul's band *YKippers* has just finished another album."
Overall: ★★★★

SUNSHINE SNOWSTORM

Name: Miami Vice Chronicles
What is it? The reason 35-year-old builders began wearing shoes without socks.
Where you'll find it: http://www.wildhorse.com/vice/
What's it like? Roll up those pastel Armani sleeves, it's time for a 50-kilo nosebag of dandruff-bustin' undercover action. First, choose your soundtrack – they're all listed here. *ZZ Top, The Fixx, Dead Can Dance, Peter Cetera, The Stones...* Hell, even Phil Collins sounds okay with the top down. Next, relive every episode and every silver-fingered drug lord who ever sneered into his Martini. Now, are you ready to see why all the go-go girls on the Key were in the pockets of Tubbs and Crockett? Those sun tans in the Gallery are tissue deep, those trousers staggeringly casual, and those video clips *prove* that tough guys can wear peach and still say, "You're bustin' my balls".
Upside: If Crockett or Tubbs kicked open a porthole in Florida, this place has the scuffed shoe.
Downside: *Mike And The Mechanics, Nash Bridges* and the malfunctioning video clips.
Typical quote: "What was the name of Sonny's pet alligator? Elvis. Sonny had him because he was a retired University of Florida mascot. He also has a clock inside of him because of a 'Captain Hook' frat prank." A

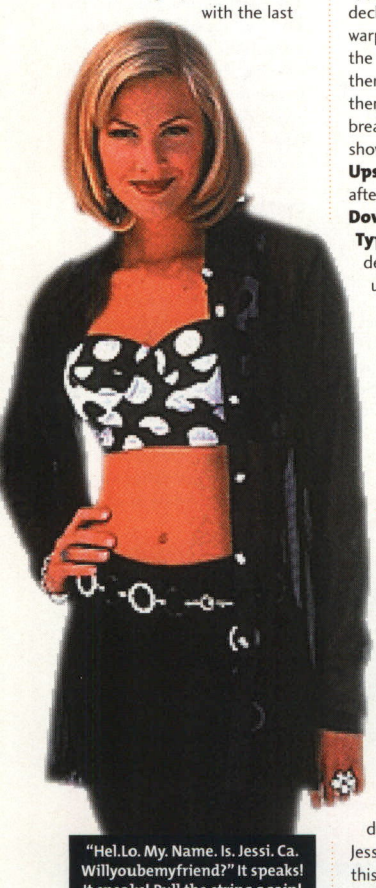
fascinating tidbit from the FAQ section.
Overall: ★★★★

TELLY GO TECHNO

Name: Tomorrow's World
What is it? Upbeat science stuff.
Where you'll find it: http://www.bbc.co.uk/tw/
What's it like? Taking its cue from more hands-on museums, *Tomorrow's World* has realised that the kid-friendly approach is the only way to introduce the next century. Its Web pages are no different. Science is divided into Medicine, The Environment, Space and Technology. There are exhibitions, jobs, feedback, freebies, an archive basement and flying cars in *Future Fantastic*. Most significant of all, perhaps, is the fact that geek boy can find lust by clicking on the words Phillipa Forrester and Gillian Anderson. Yep, science has gone full circle.
Upside: The BBC's finest site.
Downside: Hmm, science or techno-trivia?
Typical quote: "The Avrocar is a genuine flying saucer, built by the US Military as a precursor to the hovercraft... *Future Fantastic* has obtained amazing colour footage which shows it in flight."
Overall: ★★★★★

MARINE BOY

Name: Man From Atlantis Home Page
What is it? Breathtaking aquatic adventures with the last survivor of The Lost Civilisation.
Where you'll find it: http://207.176.47.3/atlantis/
What's it like? It's a man! It's a dolphin! It's Patrick Duffy in a web-fingered pre-Dallas amphibian-a-thon! "I didn't even own a bathing suit," claims Duffy in the 1977 *TV Guide* interview, before revealing a number of occupational ordeals involving green contact lenses, hairless torsos and snorkelling sessions. Duffy isn't the show's biggest fan, but this home page applauds loudly from its deckchair. Plot guides cover time warps, aliens and evil scientists, the trivia is unmissable and there are audio files of the theme tune and photographs of breathing gills. How *did* the show flop after just one series?
Upside: A return to Saturday afternoons in the mid '70s.
Downside: No video clips.
Typical quote: "The hands, designed by the same make-up man who created Spock's ears for *Star Trek*, are fashioned of latex. 'Don't ever get webs and try to eat' he said disdainfully."
Overall: ★★★★



"Hel.Lo. My. Name. Is. Jessi. Ca. Willyoubemyfriend?" It speaks! It speaks! Pull the string again!

SUGAR AND SPICE

Name: The World Of Sweet Valley
What is it? The lobotomised cousin of *Beverley Hills 90210*.
Where you'll find it: http://lausd.k12.ca.us/~kcourtne/swvalley/
What's it like? A dangerously Californian teen-scene custard or mid-morning cult fantasy involving extraordinarily blonde identical twins? Who cares? It really boils down to whether you fancy Jessica or Elizabeth. Not that this bothers the ra-ra pom-pom hi-there author. Sure, the background info on the twins is unmissable, but the photos are restricted by far too many plot summaries, virtual fifth grade refectories and a *Sweet Valley High* quiz. Suddenly you realise that, for some folk, this isn't mere backstabbing, date-stealing candyfloss, but reflective social drama.
Upside: Jessica and the possibility of driving the coach for the (ahem) Unicorn Club.
Downside: Books! Newsletters! Message boards! Since when could we read?
Typical quote: "I've just been informed by a reliable source that the *Sweet Valley High* TV show will be returning for a fourth season."
Overall: ★★★

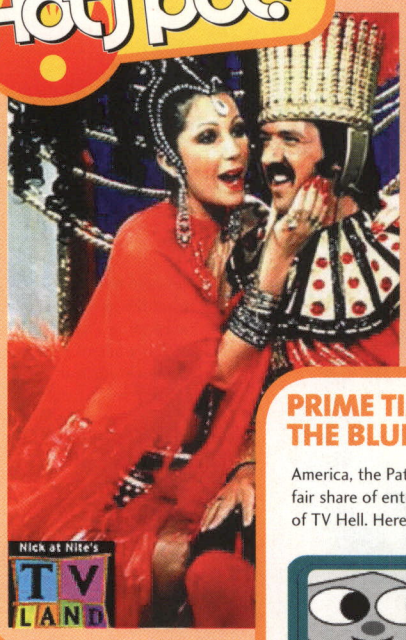
MAN FRIDAY

Name: Unofficial Ginger Home Page
What is it? The unauthorised monitor of media Nazi Chris Evans.
Where you'll find it: http://easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~gingernet/unofficial/home.htm
What's it like? Chris Evans must never be referred to as a "genius" ever again. Samuel Beckett is a genius. Chris Morris is a genius. Chris Evans is a Rice Krispie kid who spent too much time in the milk. In the surprising absence of an official goon-ginger central, this embarrassing celebrity stalker steps up and promotes the limp Letterman just as he would himself. From the jolly japes of *TFI Friday* we get ugly bloke photos, fat lookalikes and T-shirts that read "Top Totty". As usual, the *TFI* bar is in chaos, but Chris saves the day and introduces *Texas* for the 522nd time this series. Hurrah!
Upside: Regular updates and news. If Evans breathes you'll see the steam.
Downside: What's Jonathan Ross doing these days?
Typical quote: "Waiting outside, I see Chris again. This time I ask him for a photo. Me: 'Hey Chris.' Chris: 'Yeah.' Me: 'Can I take a photo?' Chris: 'Sure.' Me: 'Thanks, it's for the Ginger Web site.' Chris: 'Cool!'"
Overall: ★★★★

DRAGON FIRE

Name: S4C Ar y We – S4C On the Web
What is it? Social energiser, cultural firework, public service broadcaster and home of top Monday night Euro-footie show *Scorio*.
Where you'll find it: http://www.s4c.co.uk/home.html
What's it like? It's like the motorway signs over the River Severn: Welsh first, English later. The impact of S4C has been huge and its Web presence reflects a similarly strident mix of news and information. But if they're to convince non-Welsh speakers to bend their aerials westward, they'll have to do better than these functional programme outlines. Despite showcasing the Cymru pop and film revolution, S4C On The Web is dominated by traditional song, drama, and the surreal soap *Popol y Cwm*.
Upside: A hot list of Welsh newspapers, universities, sport and *Catatonia's* home page.
Downside: *Scorio* presenter Amanda Protheroe Thomas is nowhere to be seen.
Typical quote: "Where can I get a dress like the one Sue Roderick wore in *Popol Y Cwm?*"
Overall: ★★

HotSpot!



Name: TV Party Tonight
What is it? Three decades of genuinely obscure American TV nightmares.
Where you'll find it: http://www.infi.net/~homeroom/tvparty.html
What's it like? Affairs with the next door neighbour! Blaxploitation girl cops! Bizarrely choreographed variety show dance troupes! If the world was elsewhere when it was broadcast, you'll find it here. Gawp at the domestic gunpowder keg that was *The Sonny And Cher Show*, see cavemen in space, the dire Bill Cosby vehicle *Cos*, the slapstick sitcom with The Pruitts of Southampton and desperate ratings bombs like 1975's *Smothers Brothers*.
Upside: Somewhere beyond retro chic.
Downside: It's American. No Jumbo Spencer here.
Typical quote: "By 1973, the tabloids were ripe with stories of their shouting matches, cancelled gigs and even reports of Cher sporting a black eye. With the show finishing eighth for the '73 to '74 season, Cher filed for divorce..."

PRIME TIME – THE BLUNDER YEARS

America, the Patron Saint Of Television, has had its fair share of entrants staggering through the gates of TV Hell. Here's three of their more forgettable efforts...

1950s

Winky-Dink and You

Ah, the pre-school cartoon adventures of Winky Dink. Kids could order a piece of clear Winky Dink plastic through the post, place it against the telly screen and create virtual bridges for their hero to walk across. In the 1950s, mind. No kidding. Children without bridges inevitably used crayons, pens, spray cans, anything. Mom and Dad no doubt soon had another name for Winky.

1960s

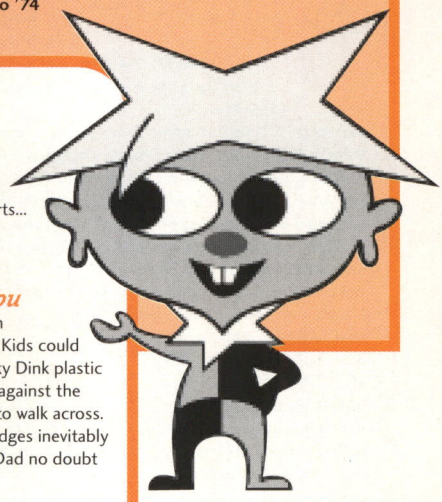
Mr Terrific

A gas station geek pops a pill and magically turns into a superhero. This truly bizarre crime-busting adventure series debuted on the very same night as *Captain Nice*, the story of a serum-developing chemist with similar powers but a much larger cape.

1970s

The Joy of Living With Reverend Ike

A diamond-encrusted evangelist who was openly proud of his flamboyant lifestyle and showed no remorse as he systematically removed cash from his congregation. His catch phrase, "Thelack of money is the root of all evil," proved that the Lord does indeed move in mysterious ways.



Comedy

LOVELY SENSE OF HUMOUR: **ANDY LOWE**
alowe@futurenet.co.uk

HotSpot!

Name: Glebe's Thrift Funnel
What is it? A crisp and suitably leery Web shrine to *Brass Eye* comedy deity Chris Morris.
Where you'll find it: http://www.koekie.org.uk/funnel/
What's it like? Ever since Morris smuggled his brand of psycho-guerrilla media-mangling on to mainstream television, fans have been busy cluttering up the Web with the usual ill-channelled blithers of allegiance. But this is special. From the name (an obscure phoney addition to the end credits of *The Day Today)* and the introductory text (beautifully fluent in the glitchy, wrong-footing metaphor of Morris's vernacular), it's clear that, although the page authors are students, they also Get The Joke. Another aspect that sets aside this site as a rare species indeed is that it's not only regularly updated, but worth coming back to time and time again.
Upside: As a bow to the mentality of their mentor, they've toiled and obsessed over the detail and content.
Downside: Basic design, a confusing structure and a hint of trainspotterism.
Typical quote: "Set on fire, bum-raped, or burgled senseless by Britain's marauding criminals. This month, police pictures showed another estate in Manchester, turning itself into a gun."

TOP GITS TONIGHT...

One notable aspect of Glebe's Thrift Funnel is the sheer amount of blatantly unnecessary WORK pumped into it. Highlights include exclusive interviews with Morris's co-conspirators (notably Welsh Pot Noodle advert man Peter Baynham), a picture of THAT *Brass Eye* subliminal message that got Michael Grade's braces in such a twist and a torturous transcription of *The Sun*/Neil Kinnock hoax episode of *On The Hour*. Our particular favourite, however, is the chance for you to e-mail in your favourite Morris aphorism. Here's a swift selection of factgasm headlines to pummel your laughter glands from the opening credits of *The Day Today*, Morris' first venture into TV terrorism.

Coming up as stories in the programme...

"Portillo's face felt like guts, says girl"
"Bearded cleric in oily chin insertion"
"Headmaster found using large boy's head as satellite dish"
"Branson's clockwork dog crosses Atlantic floor"
"Feel my nose and put my specs there, roars drunken Major"
"Bouncing elephantiasis woman destroys central Portsmouth"
"Bottomley refreshed after three days on cross"
"Where now for man raised by puffins?"
"Fist-headed man destroys church"
"You could blow notes across the holes in his head, claims Sinatra doc"
"Crazed wolves in store a bad mistake admits Mothercare"
Those are the headlines.
God we wish they weren't...

FUNNY WHO?

Name: Jackie "The Joke Man" Martling's JokeLand
What is it? An old, fat Yank who's a member of Howard Stern's radio posse, appears on *Saturday Night Live*, and thinks himself something of a "card".
Where you'll find it: http://m3.monsterbit.com/jackiejokeman.com/
What's it like? Prepare yourself for genuinely hilarious, unnecessary swearing (with sweary phrases helpfully underlined), and a withering procession of painfully slight jokes propped up with numbing, bloke-in-the-pub tawdriness. Martling proclaims a "not-give-a-fuck atmosphere" as, clearly, this enables him to use the word "fuck". Again. Big? Clever? Nah.
Upside: A neat site, with some nice colours but there's...
Downside: ...an authentic not-give-a-fup-about-how-funny-the-jokes-are atmosphere.
Typical quote: "A winded young lass named Voghill/Sat down to rest on a mole hill/The resident mole stuck his nose in her..." I think we'll leave it there, shall we?
Overall: ★

STUFFING AND NONSENSE

Name: The Adam And Joe Show
What is it? Peripheral joshery from Adam Buxton and Joe Cornish, two young people who, towards the end of last year, managed to wriggle their way on to Channel 4.
Where you'll find it: http://www.channel4.co.uk/entertainment/adam_and_joe/
What's it like? The TV show (criminally buried in a post-midnight slot) was a funnier, less self-conscious version of *Fist Of Fun*, which had the common stupidity to exploit the Brit TV obsession with The Cuddly Toy. Here, it's all based around an incongruous little image map. Clicking on the telephone leads to the chat forum. The two teddies take you to biography info. And the startled dog introduces Baaad Dad's video and music recommendations: "I prefer pressing the Play button with my index finger extended further than my other fingers." Adam and Joe rant about the international shows which, to various degrees, have stolen their format (including the Norwegian version, in which two men review paint), and the segment that's surely destined to be their dead parrot sketch – Toy Trainspotting. Look out for the new series scheduled for this autumn.
Upside: Most of the site's written by Adam and Joe. And they keep it puerile.
Downside: It's a bit corporate.
Typical quote: "He stroked my nylon fur, running a finger along the upside-down 'Y' of my mouth. He was producing an ironic spoof of the film *Showgirls* and wanted stuffed toys to act the parts. This was my chance to be a somebody and not just a bag of cotton-wool shaped like a bear."
Overall: ★★★

A LITTLE QUIVERING RABBIT NOSTRIL

Name: Suckin' Satan's Pecker
What is it? A rosy, all-hail! zone devoted to the taboo-trashing, Texan stand-up Bill Hicks, now no longer with us.
Where you'll find it: http://www.electricfrog.co.uk/richardh/bill/index.htm
What's it like? Pink and black and pert, with the usual pics, sound files, reprints, transcripts, and video clips. The What's New section is nourishingly current, covering the recent, mostly unmissable reissues and "lost" material. Whatever you think of his transatlantic hip-speak and occasional tendency to overtell the joke, Hicks combined a breathtaking blatancy with genuine funniness. Unlike similar preachy types (Ben Elton, say), his edgy, devilish charisma lent him precious likeability.
Upside: Exhaustive and fanatical yet dignified.
Downside: The pictures are a bit slow to down-load.
Typical quote: "Do you want your grandmother dying like a little bird in some hospital room? Her translucent skin so thin you can see her last heartbeat work its way down her blue veins? Or do you want her to meet Chuck Norris?"
Overall: ★★★★

"TAKE MY MOTHER-IN-LAW. NO. PLEASE DO."

Name: Stand-Up Comedy Bingo
What is it? Paradise for jaded comedy cynics.
Where you'll find it: http://www.fadetoblack.com/bingo.htm
What's it like? Take a selection of hackneyed, flogged-to-a-puree stand-up topics – such as an overweight comic referring to their weight, the difference between cats and dogs, or '70s kids' TV. Proceed to use these subjects for your own mirth by smirking, shaking your head and ticking them off as they emerge in an original adaptation of Bingo. It's a good idea, but it's been sloppily realised and is FAR TOO AMERICAN.
Upside: The matching of the topics to the types of comedian is sharply familiar.
Downside: There's not enough here, the site needs a design overhaul, and there's a tangible odour of frustrated comedian.
Typical quote: "As the witty young comics entertain you with their own unique way of rehashing the same material, mark the cell of the Comedy Bingo Card which corresponds to each hack premise or phrase."
Overall: ★★

Toytrainspotting
"Choose toys. Choose children. Choose relentless dribbling and lumpy bib sick..."

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Art

KNOWS WHAT HE LIKES: **GARRICK WEBSTER**

gwebster@futurenet.co.uk

ONE FOR LITTLE BEAVER

Name: Trophies of Honour
What is it? Over 500 pieces of Native American art.
Where you'll find it: http://www.msstate.edu/Fineart_Online/Gallery/Trophies/troph1.htm
What's it like? Covering Cherokee, Iroquois, Mayan and Sioux art, peruse paintings of everything from traditional brave hairdos (eat your heart out, Keith Prodigy) to woodland beasts, sculptures, rugs and ornaments. The site mixes traditional pieces with more modern efforts (some of which are truly cringesome), but it all comes with a bona fide blessing from the 82-year-old Cheyenne, Chief Depoe.
Upside: An insight into indigenous cultures.
Downside: The images are too small to be fully appreciated and the site design is rather unimaginative.
Typical quote: "Klahyum – greetings. I am Chief Depoe. My heart is with those who have gone before me, and those who have come after me."
Overall: ★★★

DUH-DAAAH. DADA.

Name: Anti-Art Productions
What is it? An artistic forum that aims to expose the truth lying beneath the complacent facade of the contemporary human condition.
Where you'll find it: http://www.anti-art.com/index.html
What's it like? Mad and paranoid, but full of interesting, arresting images. The site's run by Robert Dada, who's a bit of a dab hand with his Corel PhotoPaint and various other arty software packages. And Bob's not alone. About 20 other artists share his anti-everything views and have chosen to air them on his site. See works like 'Bucket of Boiling Gorillas', 'Postcard from the Ass End of the Hale-Bopp Comet' and 'The Birth of Good/Evil Henceforth to be Called Gooeyville'.
Upside: It's lively, visual and amusing, and it even makes some interesting points about consumerism, religion and the dear old USA.
Downside: Half these people probably work in various financial institutions.
Typical quote: "Anti-Art wishes to deconstruct and rebuild that which society accepts and grab said society by the throat and force it to look into a prism which refracts alternatives."
Overall: ★★★★

CORPORATE IMAGES

Name: Fractal Design On-line
What is it? The publisher of digital art hits Ray Dream Studio, Poser and Painter.
Where you'll find it: http://www.fractal.com/
What's it like? Proving that corporate doesn't have to mean boring, this is the place to come for down-loadable demos of Painter 5, Poser 2 for Windows and more. As added encouragement for you to use Fractal Design's software, the site features Artist Of The Month, Image Of The Day, and has mini-tutorials on software techniques. If you're feeling creative, Fractal Design is staging a competition called Beyond Canvas. Entries must be created with FD software and received by July 31.
Upside: Good software, handy technical tips and some fine artwork too.
Downside: Anti-Art Productions wouldn't approve (see previous review).
Typical quote: "The digital realm is one of my territories which lives in complete and utter harmony with those creative flows that run through my mind every day, and I find that fulfiling, exciting, and very satisfying." Steve McArdle, April's Artist of the Month.
Overall: ★★★★

HANG HIM ON YOUR WARHOL

Name: The Andy Warhol Museum
What is it? A Web site

HotSpot!

Name: Art Crimes
What is it? An archive of graffiti art from across the globe.
Where you'll find it: http://www.graffiti.org/
What's it like? The on-line equivalent of a never-ending train ride through West London. Except this one will take you past the elaborately tagged-up walls of New York, San Francisco, LA, Chicago, Berlin, Montreal, Sao Paulo, Brighton, Eindhoven and Warsaw – anywhere, in fact, that has walls and aerosol cans on special. This is more than just a gallery, though. Peruse interviews with featured artists, articles about graffiti and heaps of links to hip hop sites. And if you've always had an urge but never the gumption to spray paint public buildings, try out the World Wide Wall. The Java applet enables you to select various colours and scribble all over the wall texture of your choice. It's not *quite* the same, but create something half decent and you could join the ranks of legendary art criminals documented here, as they'll leave your artistic efforts on display for a day or two.
Upside: Heaps to see and lots of information to absorb.
Downside: Takes itself a tad too seriously and the wordy academic commentaries on graffiti jar with the colour and vigour of the art itself.
Typical quote: "I'd spent a whole day on a fairly large production. I had this brilliant sensation of a burning throat, chest and stomach. I felt dizzy and sick. This is when I finally realised paint fumes were really starting to get to me." (Urban artist Sehmuel.)

TO LIVE AND SPRAY IN LA

Graffiti art is most often associated with the '80s culture of American inner cities, alongside break dancing, *Run DMC* and crap films like *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo*. Today, however, it's been adopted by urban yoofs the world over. Here's a couple of global tags to satisfy your eyes...

From Tokyo...

... to London...

...to, suprise surpise, Los Angeles.

You know, when you think about it, we're all goldfish trapped inside an icecube waiting to be swallowed by life's metaphorical deathgob... Ah, forget it.

from the Andy Warhol Museum.
Where you'll find it: http://www.clpgh.org/warhol/
What's it like? A nice bitta Warhol – but just a little bitta Warhol, unfortunately. The small on-line collection includes self portraits, silk screens, that picture of a shoe and precious little else. The museum shop, paradoxically, has much more on display. T-shirts, books and posters are all waiting to be yours, for the right price. What irony. Warhol would be positively jubilant.
Upside: Considering that his art has been dispersed all around the globe, this is probably the best on-line collection there is.
Downside: The pictures are too small and too few.
Typical quote: "I paint pictures of myself to... I guess, yeah, to remind myself that I am still around." The artist speaks.
Overall: ★★★

THE WORST OF HIRST

Name: Damien Hirst
What is it? A page on 1995's Turner Prize-winning artist.
Where you'll find it: http://illumin.co.uk/turner/hurst.html
What's it like? Disappointing. In the vast virtual gallery that is the Internet, this appears to be the closest thing Damian Hirst has to a Web site. Of course, it's not his fault. But surely the Tate Gallery could provide more in the way of images. What you do get is a photo of Hirst, a brief biography and a description of the piece that won him the Turner Prize. There's also a QuickTime video where the camera circles round that poor bisected sheep. Bah.
Upside: At least he has an on-line presence.
Downside: We want more pickled animals!
Typical quote: "He's best known for a series of works in which dead animals are presented as *mementi mori* in forms ironically appropriated from the museum of natural history rather than of art."
Overall: ★

GRADUARTED

Name: SVA Experimental Server
What is it? A collection of works from various art graduates' theses.
Where you'll find it: http://199.35.154.221/
What's it like? Pretentious perhaps, but interesting nonetheless. About 20 artists present their work, nearly all of which has been designed specifically for the Internet. Revel in animated Buddhas, interactive slide shows and Shockwave-powered moving icons. You can even "play" with some of the art.
Upside: Lots to do, lots to see, and some stimulating concepts.
Downside: Graphics-heavy pages make for a slow-moving Web browser. And there's no commentary on any of the art.
Typical quote: There's not a single word on site, so... um...?
Overall: ★★★★

MASTER OF THE LILY

Name: The Claude Monet Home Page

"He with grudge doth smudge..." A splat of 'anti-art' from Roger Dada.

What is it? An Internet site devoted to one of Impressionism's prime movers.
Where you'll find it: http://www.columbia.edu/~jns16/monet_html/monet.html
What's it like? Sparse on images, but nonetheless rich with the essence of Monet. Several pictures from his 'Poplars' series appear here, which he painted at different times of day under varying light conditions. It was the way that the same scene could change through various moments in time that Monet set out to capture, and it's fitting that a series rather than a random scattering of his works should be shown here. The visuals are all backed up by the requisite biographical information, an overview of the Impressionist movement, and a formal analysis of 'Four Trees'.
Upside: A concise, well-constructed and informed site.
Downside: Underwhelming. Ten or 20 more pictures would go down a treat.
Typical quote: "In 1892, Monet painted his series of Rouen Cathedral, noticing how every aspect of the scene was altered in accordance with the changing light. This realisation was to become an obsession in his later years. At last, Monet gained renown."
Overall: ★★★

HE DATED MADONNA

Name: Jean-Michel Basquiat
What is it? A brief homage to Basquiat as part of The Eli Broad Family Foundation Web site.
Where you'll find it: http://www.broadartfdn.org/bio-basquiat.html
What's it like? With a major Hollywood film out telling Basquiat's life story, you'd think his work would be considerably more prevalent on-line. Strangely, it seems that Basquiat's important enough to have a film made about him, but not to have his own Web site. Our world is thrown into disarray... This site tantalises you with one example of his work. But only one, mind.
Upside: There's a biography of Basquiat as well.
Downside: An utterly inadequate representation of this 20th century idol of style.
Typical quote: "Contrary to many observers of his life who, with veiled racism, considered him a primitive, wild-child talent, Basquiat's endeavours were informed by a long-standing and sophisticated interest in the devices of painting."
Overall: ★

DARK AGE ART PAGE

Name: Celtic Art And Illumination
What is it? Revive the fabled Celtic golden age through arts and crafts.
Where you'll find it: http://www.cadvision.com/attoboy/cari/cknotdec7.html
What's it like? Far from stunning, but handy if you always wanted to learn how to do those Celtic knots. You'll find tutorials on basic knots, modified knots and even knotting with irregular objects. In case you were wondering, a knot is one of those twisty, intertwining Celtic motifs. On top of all this are instructions on how to decorate things with gold leaf – "guild and leaf" – and make parchments. Try not to faint with excitement. Thank you.
Upside: Comprehensive instructions to keep the wannabe Celt well occupied.
Downside: Not enough interesting illustrations to keep passing browsers interested. The Book of Kells it ain't.
Typical quote: "I find one of the easiest ways to build nice, consistent Celtic knots is to use graph paper. This gives you an even guide to follow as you plot out your knot." Surely this is sacrilege, by Odin?
Overall: ★★★

Books

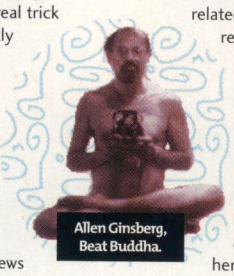
DUSTING THE SHELVES: **GARY TIPP**
gtipp@futurenet.co.uk

Hotspot!

Name: Douglas Coupland
What is it? Official site of the Gen X founding father.
Where you'll find it: http://www.coupland.com
What's it like? Wired for both soundbites and vision, Coupland is a decent author, excellent journalist and state-of-the-art self-promotionalist. An impressively swish, colourful affair, his official page reflects this ably. Highlights include audio readings from *Life After God* and *Microserfs* and a brilliantly cocky article tracing the whole of Western thought from the Renaissance through to the most recent Benetton ad campaign. Okay, so he might be a smart arse, but he's much more smart than arse. If you get what I mean.
Upside: Great writing, outstanding site.
Downside: The whiff of MTV.
Typical quote: "Let's talk about *things* – about so many things that the *thingness* of things almost crushes one with psychic weight."

DEAD BEAT

Name: Ashes And Blues
What is it? A memorial to the life and death of erstwhile beat poet and chubby Buddhist, Allen Ginsberg.
Where you'll find it: http://www.levity.com/corduroy/ginsberg/index.htm
What's it like? Ginsberg recently surrendered to liver cancer, but his literary legacy lives on with this tribute site. The hirsute Beat might have seen the best minds of his generation destroyed by madness, but the real trick is to find out exactly what Ginsberg did for the 30 years after *Howl!* (1956). In fairness, you'll find a great range of material here from biographical information to reviews and a host of interviews. Ginsberg seldom refused a chat, which ain't such a bad thing, as he gave good print. But who'd have bet on Bill Burroughs outliving them all, eh?
Upside: Ginsberg was mates with Beat icons Kerouac, Cassady and Burroughs.
Downside: The old tart also slept with them all.
Typical quote: "Maybe I'll turn into a big prick with this little tiny asshole." Al on death.
Overall: ★★★★


Allen Ginsberg, Beat Buddha.

WHAT'S THE FREQUENCY, UMBERTO?

Name: BookRadio
What is it? Books on audio files. Yay!
Where you'll find it: http://www.BookRadio.com/
What's it like? A slick audiozine on all things book related. With RealAudio reviews and interviews of the latest US releases, this site not only covers fiction, but non-fiction, sci-fi, food and wine, poetry, mysteries and music. There are some big names here too, with Oliver Sacks, Deepak Chopra, Jonathan Katz and Mia Farrow all turning the airwaves various shades of powder blue. But the highlight is James Ellroy in great voice and reading from *My Dark Places:* "Your death defines my life..." Up-beat, enthusiastic and a true friend of the bookworm.
Upside: Your literary whistle will be whet.
Downside: The Yankee bias.
Typical quote: "My recommendation is to stop whatever you're doing and go get this book now."
Overall: ★★★★

THE INFO

Name:
The Martin Amis Page
What is it? The literary lowdown on the author with the best capped teeth in the biz.
Where you'll find it: http://www.albion.edu/fac/engl/diedrick/
What's it like? There's a real dearth of comely sites dedicated to UK authors, so it's a blessed relief that the one dedicated to our most talented scribe is up to scratch. In places it's as dry as a rice salad gone wrong, but at least the portions are large.

It's Martin Amis. And he wants to kiss you.

Chock-full of biographical info, selected interviews, criticism, sizeable excerpts from the man's work, reviews, links and the compulsory bibliography, you won't go hungry.
Upside: Plenty of reference for the Amis zealot.
Downside: Extra dry.
Typical quote: "The author is not free of sadistic impulses."
Overall: ★★★

MOUTH HERPES

Name: Your Weekly Kiss
What is it? Worshipping at the altar of ripped bodices and sex without stains.
Where you'll find it: http://www.mindspring.com/driordan/
What's it like? A surprisingly down-to-earth look at the airbrushed world of fiction romance. Calendar dates, links, new releases, excerpts and discussion sites are all offered with military precision. There's hardly any time to wake up and smell the pot pourri before you're shuffled off to the next fussy item. Best description? Ever so Mills and Boonsy.
Upside: Kinda funny.
Downside: Kinda sad.
Typical quote: "One minute the sexy-as-sin cop was rescuing Emily Cooper from drunken hoodlums. Five minutes later, he was stripping his clothes off in front of a group of voracious women."
Overall: ★★

FULL PAPER JACKET

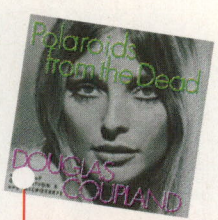
Doug's made a global splash and his novels have been translated into royalty cheques in more than just one language. Here are some of his favourite covers.

"Finnish is the strangest looking language to read."

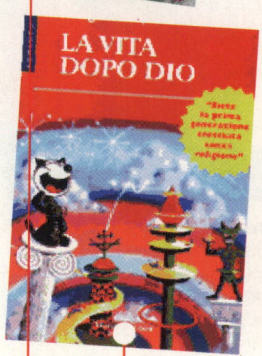
"This is maybe my favourite cover of all." (Israel.)

"I think this is a better title than *Microserfs*." Norway outdoes Coupland in the wordplay stakes.

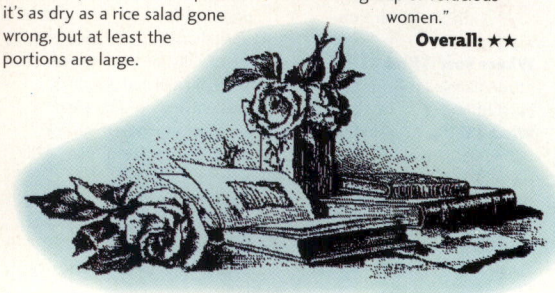
"Japanese editions are always, *always* the weirdest."



"The good ol' American version. Nice eyes."



"I think this is a Rodney Allen Greenblatt painting." An Italian offering.



Magazines

AT THE DENTIST'S: **ANDY LOWE**
alowe@futurenet.co.uk

SMOKES

Name: Cigar Aficionado
What is it? Some hearty, rosy-cheeked, bearded, sweetly reactionary American men go on about cigars.
Where you'll find it: http://www.cigaraficionado.com/
What's it like? They offer hot tips on issues close to the business of smoking cigars: "Q – What is the material that cigar-makers use to fasten the cap to the cigar? A – That's a rice-based adhesive!" They review cigars: "The smoke is rich and lightly earthy, with hints of leather and roasted nuts." They report, at interminable length, on their cigar-stinking, charity-fund-raising gala-balls.
Upside: It's good for a laugh.
Downside: Pipe Aficionado would've been funnier.
Typical quote: "Five years ago, Cigar Aficionado held its first 'Night To Remember' at the famed 21 Club restaurant in New York City. We listed six charities that the guests could select for their donation. The charity selected by most guests was prostate cancer."
Overall: ★★

One of FHM's ubiquitous headless cleavage shots: can I do the topless model joke now please?

BLOKES

Name: FHM
What is it? "Jokes! Drinks! Girls!" Get the idea?
Where you'll find it: http://www.erack.com/fhm/
What's it like? Now that *Loaded* editor James Brown is off to be a grown-up man (he's taking over at *GQ*), *FHM* looms even larger as the blaring, swearing new wave in *Loaded*'s ever-ebbing professional lad-fad tide. Happily, it's gone from a turgid waiting-room flick to a wieldy great doorstop of a monthly men's-things fix. On top of a curiously charitable reprint of the latest issue's cover feature, all the regular sections are in there. This includes an excellent version of 'Position Of The Week' with Barbie and Ken doing the honours and a "How was it for you?" e-mail response facility. There are also, as you'd expect, lots of pictures of attractive women dressed in barely-there clothing.
Upside: Surprisingly light on the appropriated *Loaded*-speak.
Downside: You could say it's just a male *Cosmo* with the tits and underwear transferred from ads to editorial.
Typical quote: "Where would a bloke stick his knob if he was looking to 'bagpipe' someone?"
Overall: ★★★★

BEAVERS

Name: Hustler
What is it? Larry Flynt's flagship gyno-mag.
Where you'll find it: http://www.hustler.com/
What's it like? An undeniably canny and super-slick on-line extension of the oily and nasty (but cosmetically appealing) *Hustler* and its sidekicks *Barely Legal* and *Busty Beauties*. Instead of trying to make you buy the actual mag, the site advertises its unique-to-the-Net commercial concern, Hustler Club On-line. Apparently, this "goes further than the newsstands will allow". Which presumably means that fully paid-up members get a full-on hit of the old in-out, Filthy Larry style, without any black spots obscuring the naughty bits.
Upside: Once you've surrendered your credit card, it's something of a one-stop shop. Er, I'd imagine.
Downside: Propped up by the usual dildos and penile-enlargement-it-really-works! ads.
Typical quote: *"Busty Beauties* is the ultimate tit-man's fantasy from out of this galaxy."
Overall: ★★★

BOYZINE

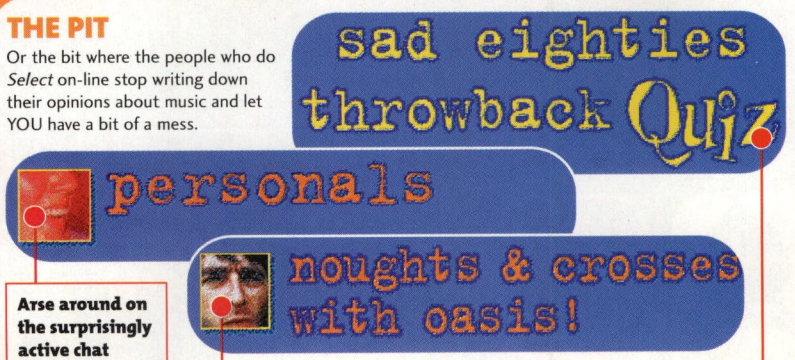
Name: Attitude Interactive
What is it? Well, it's not exactly *Loaded*, is it?
Where you'll find it: http://attitude.msn.com/
What's it like? The cynic in me suggests this could be Microsoft's stab at PC hipness, but the screen-gazer in me says otherwise. This gay lifestyle mag is packed with features, fashion, health and interviews – something like a lushed-up *GQ* with a fair flaunting of two-fingering campness added for good measure. Of course, *Attitude* isn't for everyone (how true...) but if it's just the gay bit putting you off this most perusable mag, then you should be strapped in front of a monitor and have this made your home page for life. Honey.
Upside: More Web trickery than seems possible.
Downside: It's currently being redesigned, so you won't be able to see it 'till mid-June.
Typical quote: "Sometimes I get a bit of funny mail, but I'm not bothered. No requests for used underwear yet, but I've had requests for a signed photo with "To Barry with lots of love" on it and you get the idea that it's not a female Barry..." Ross "Grant Off *EastEnders*" Kemp.
Overall: ★★★

HotSpot!

Name: Select
What is it? In my day, it was a monthly *Melody Maker*. In colour. Nowadays...
Where you'll find it: http://www.erack.com/ select/
What's it like? And like the whole hazy crazy kingdom of POP!, now it's... Different. The underground's gone overground *(Baby Bird)*, the overground's gone underground *(Blur)*, the dancers are acting like rockers *(The Chems)* and yes, the rockers *(U2)* are acting like dancers... 'Tis a strange world indeed and to make any sense of it whatsoever, *Select* is the on-line Bible you need to read. Teeming with gossip, goodness and a guaranteed absence of the cringesome word "poptastic", *Select* is *Smash Hits* with book reviews. And suffice to say that this means it's very good indeed.
Upside: Real-world mag features that are worth reading and include down-loadable song soundbites.
Downside: Some of those fonts are a bit odd.
Typical quote: "Electronica Lollapalooza is to go ahead in the US during September. Featuring *The Prodigy, Chemical Brothers* and *The Orb*, the 'Organic' tour will take the sound of British techno to 10,000-capacity venues in 20 American cities."

THE PIT

Or the bit where the people who do *Select* on-line stop writing down their opinions about music and let YOU have a bit of a mess.



Arse around on the surprisingly active chat channel:
"Any fab UK girls wanna chat about *Blur, Pulp*, or any Britpop at all lemme know! US girls are shite."

Play a stimulating game of noughts and crosses with *Oasis*:
"Now you can settle the argument as to who's really best in *Oasis* through a friendly game of noughts and crosses!"

Test your knowledge with the '80s throwback quiz:
"Which nouveau homme said, 'Thatcher is the first great leader since Churchill'?"

Answer: Gary Newman

Lifestyle

Contents

50 Grin And Bare It

Getty Images

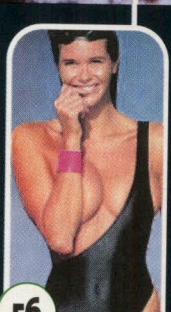
F is for Fetish

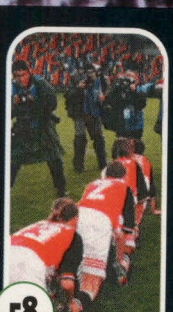
Connect's sweaty alphabetti of (ahem) "unusual" desires...

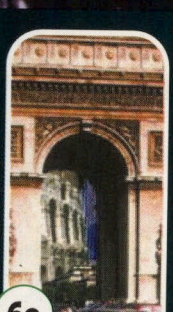
A is for Amazon
http://www.magicnet.net/~rathbun/amazon.html/html

B is for bellybutton
http://www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Sands/3556/index.html

54 Sex


56 Sport


58 Footy


60 Travel

SPORT'S PERSONALITY OF THE NET

He's never been KOed, y'know... For a Webside view of the king o' the ring, bash your browser into The Unofficial Prince Naseem Page.

http://www.iol.ie/~mla/index.html

Jim McClellan

There's a brand new techno-inspired trend in travelogue writing, and we're not talking musical postcards. Hip bitpackers across the world are globetrotting with a laptop on their back...

When I finished my finals at university, I simply wanted to pick up my backpack and get away from it all – particularly the world of books and essays. I decided that the best place to do this would be on some Thai beach. Big mistake.

I distinctly remember one afternoon at Chaweng beach on Koh Samui, surfacing through the haze of one too many ganja cookies and seeing everyone around me either reading or scribbling profound thoughts into their diaries. It felt like an impromptu creative writing course, as if I was back in some seminar room, albeit with better weather and cheaper dope.

Thanks to the wonders of modern technology, you can now share all this literary endeavour and – hey! – you don't even need to leave the house. Nowadays, the enterprising would-be travel writer takes a laptop and sits on the beach uploading new insights into the age-old wisdom of tribal peoples. The result is something like Adrian's Travels **(http://www.tibet.demon.co.uk),** an occasionally interesting site documenting his trip from Russia to Iran. It's full of stuff about "amazing scenery", wading water buffalo, yak butter tea and, oh yeah, a dead body in a Chinese park.

These techno-travellers (bitpackers, if you will) are the grass roots end of an explosion of on-line travelogues. The big daddy of them all is Steve Rhodes of Nomadic Research Labs. He's spent the last 13 years on the road, filing reports from his technobike, and is now preparing to set sail on something called the Microship **(http://www.microship.com).**

More official "explorers" are following his lead. Few people now set off up Everest, across the polar icecap or on a transoceanic rowing expedition **(http://goals.com/transrow/index.htm)** without sorting out a Web page and e-mail link first, keeping the media, sponsors and schoolkids up to date with their heroic endeavours.

Many digital trips are little more than journalistic stunts. Take Journey To The Centre Of The Earth, hosted by the Discovery Channel's Web site **(http://www.discovery.com/area/specials/deadsea/deadsea1.htm),** in which Jim Malusa cycles from Egypt to the Dead Sea, sending text and pics as he pedals. Jim tells us that he has a thing for cycling to the low points of the earth – the Dead Sea is pretty much the lowest. Well, it's easier than cycling to the highest, I guess. Like most high-profile on-line travelling, this particular trip is supposedly educational. This means there's stuff on geology and ecology, and Discovery's helpfully drafted in regional experts to explain to the Yanks where Egypt is.

Many digital trips are just journalistic stunts – few people now set off up Everest without sorting out a Web page and e-mail link first.

Despite what those techno gurus say, the Net isn't about education. It's about the bog-standard bitpacker's view; Joe Bloggs's on-line travel ramblings. Something like Travels Of A Fuckwit **(http://hannan.ludin.com.au/~travd/jsbook.html),** the story of an objectionable Scotsman called Jonno. "Everywhere I went," bellows Jonno, "amazing and crazy things happened to me." You don't say. Any misguided middle-aged women who gives Jonno a lift as he hitchhikes across France, is clearly gagging for it. And any Frenchman who says hello obviously has designs on him. "Fucking French bastard poofs," he concludes. Good to see that travel does indeed broaden the mind.

Sceptics say that Net users need to get out of the house, but reading stuff like this makes me, for one, happy to stay at home. If you do hit the road, you run the risk of bumping into someone like Jonno.

YER ICONS AND YER RATINGS

Web site

Newsgroup

HotSpot!
The must-see site of the month

★★★★★
Near Net perfection

★★★★
Well worth a click

★★★
Above average

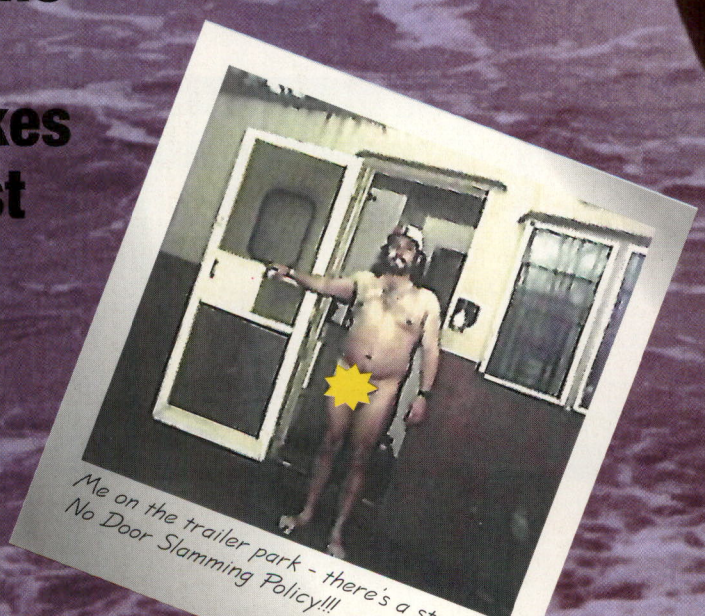
★★
Mostly mediocre

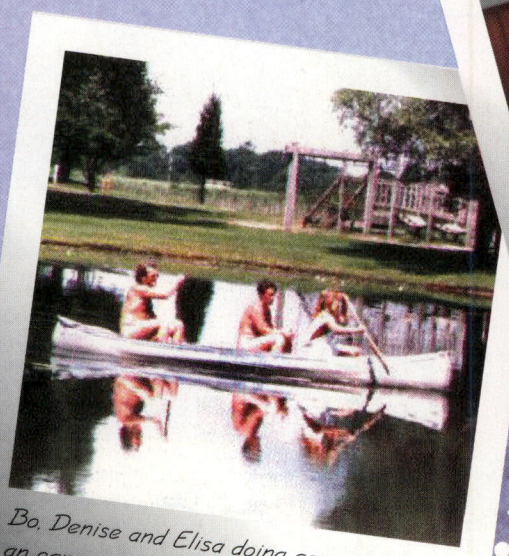
★
Cyberplop, frankly

Getty Images

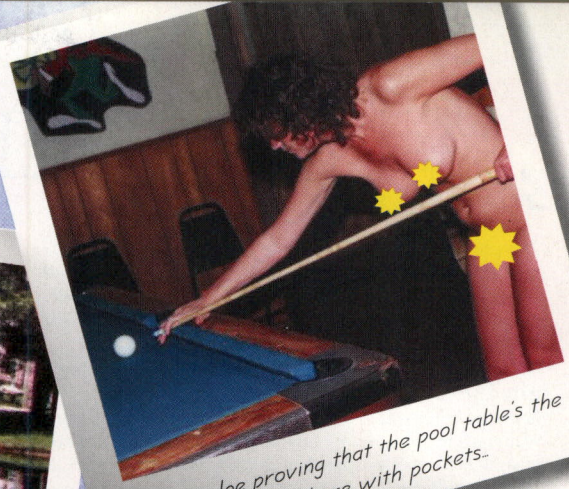
Grin and Bare it

"Nudism." "Naturism." "Body acceptance." "The clothing-optional lifestyle." Nakedness, basically. It's all around us, and it's all over the Net. A fully-clothed Jonathan Davies pokes his nose into the vast virtual colony of cybernudes, and comes out smiling.





Bo, Denise and Elisa doing canoeing. That an oar or you just pleased to see me? etc!



Sammy Joe proving that the pool table's the only thing 'round here with pockets...

Not many occasions call for taking off your clothes. Having a bath and changing into your pyjamas are the only ones I can think of off hand. So the accidental discovery – due to a typing error during a search for a "baked alaska" recipe – that the World Wide Web (and, by inference, the world) is full of people who walk around naked practically *all the time* came as something of a shock.

But the Alaskan Naturist site **(http://www.alaska.net/~johnm/soc/aknat-01.html)** is, understandably, irregularly maintained. As is the Swedish Naturist site **(http://www.algonet.se/~brummer/).** If you look further south, however, clothes start slipping to the floor all over the place.

Sammye Wall is a Seattle-based grandmother whose Web page **(http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Lofts/4838/)** details her fondness for walking around unclothed. "There's a freedom that comes only from being nude," she tells *Connect* breezily. "You're far more aware of your body, far more attuned to it when there are no clothes on it, blocking the sensations it receives when nude."

Sammye has a long-term grand plan to spend a whole seven years sailing around the world in a 57-foot yacht. Naked, of course. "I'll have to carry a lot of 15-plus sun block with me for a while. But as we spend more time at sea I'll get very tanned and not need it any more – just baby oil to keep the skin pliant."

The one thing Sammye's site lacks, though, is photographs of her pursuing her special

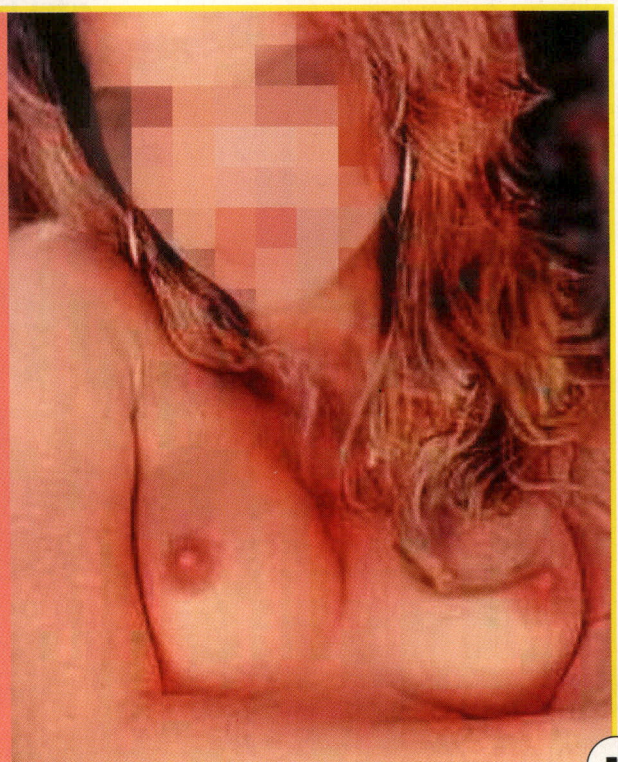
"There are times to take precautions, like barbecuing or frying bacon," Rusty admits. "Nudists, like anyone else, use common sense."

Naked Fame

How come there are no famous nudists? Ah, but there are. It's just that they haven't got round to setting up their own Web sites yet. In the meantime, there's a veritable army of amateur enthusiasts dedicated to "naturising" the rich and famous. Day and night they sit scouring magazines, pausing and frame-advancing videos (and even, if you're really lucky, laser discs), and studying photographs through magnifying glasses for the slightest sign of exposure, inadvertent or otherwise.

Thanks to them you can see the exact moment at which tennis star Steffi Graf's skirt came undone. You can linger over that time when *Beverley Hills 90210's* jowly Tori Spelling wore a blouse with only one button done up. You may squint at 500,000 blurry photographs of someone-who-might-just-be-Gillian-Anderson-out-of-*The-X-Files*-although-it's-a-bit-hard-to-tell-but-you-never-know-it-could-be with no clothes on. And, most of all, you can relive at your leisure those occasions when stars like Sharon Stone, Danni Minnogue, Gail O'Grady, Cindy Crawford and – of course – Pamela Anderson decided to go "clothing optional" for the sake of art.

Most sites offering this valuable service to the celebs find, understandably, that they have to debit your credit card to cover their expenses. But plenty of others, perhaps feeling the need to do something in return for all their heroes' hard work, offer their services for free. Totally Naked Hollywood Celebrities Raw! **(http://www.worldclass.inter.net/celebs/celebs.html)** offers a wide selection, listing their "MOST REQUESTED CELEB EVER" as Nikki Cox (from TV's *Unhappily Ever After*, apparently). Pee-Wee Sherman's Naked Celebrities **(http://www.worldclass.inter.net/celebs/celebs.html)** features everyone from Alanis Morrisette to Yasmine Bleeth. Only women celebrities seem to benefit from these sites, however, which seems a little unfair to famous men. DAI '97, meanwhile **(http://www.keg.com/dai/index.html),** is filled with montages lovingly created from freeze-framed naked bits. But please note: "If you find a picture you like, rent or buy the movie it came from!" Now that's true philanthropy.



Art without clothes

The photos you'll find on most naturist sites are colourful and innocent, but tend to be a bit crooked and blurry, with thumbs intruding on the corners. For a more professional selection, turn to Spencer Tunick's insane Naked Pavement **(http://www.thebluedot.com/tunick/).**

Spencer has devoted considerable effort to shooting naked people 'artistically' in a surreal set of urban landscapes. There's a pile of them in front of the Assemblé Nationale in Paris, there's one walking through the streets of Jerusalem, there's another brandishing a dead swordfish amid the New York traffic, and there's someone covered in painted spots strolling through a strangely litter-free subway tunnel. Streakers and skyscrapers together at last – and they're all in black-and-white, too, so they must be good.

interest. The company that runs her page won't let her include them. "If I were allowed to, I'd probably only put one up. Or maybe two. I'm really not an exhibitionist. But I don't mind being looked at – for my age I have rather a nice figure, and I'm not ashamed of my body. I get some perverts wanting nude photographs of me, but I can deal with these very easily."

Rusty Bottom has no such problems. With putting pictures up, that is. His home page **(http://www.bhm.tis.net/~bottom/natp.html/)** is covered with photos of himself standing in fields, beside the pool, and in a forest – completely starkers. Which rather brings us back to why clothes were invented in the first place. "I limit outdoor activities to the summer, spring and early fall," Rusty says. "Common sense would tell me that it's cold, so go put something on. But nudity isn't limited to the outdoors. When it gets cold you find something to do inside." But nothing, er, dangerous, presumably. "There are times to take precautions," Rusty admits, "like barbecuing or frying bacon. Nudists, like anyone else, use common sense."

Sammye and Rusty are by no means alone. Nudism is rampant and the Web is littered with the home pages of self-confessed clothes-shedders, many fully illustrated. I, for one, will view my next-door neighbours with suspicion from now on.

The best way to appreciate the full, mind-boggling scale of nudity around the world is to tune into Charles Daney's Being And Nakedness **(http://www.best.com/~cgd/home/naturism/).** Regularly updated, it features a phone-bill-pummelling list of over 500 well-organised links to nudist societies, archives, personal home pages, FAQs and regional guides, as well as pages on similarly "off-beat" topics like paganism, yoga and bohemians.

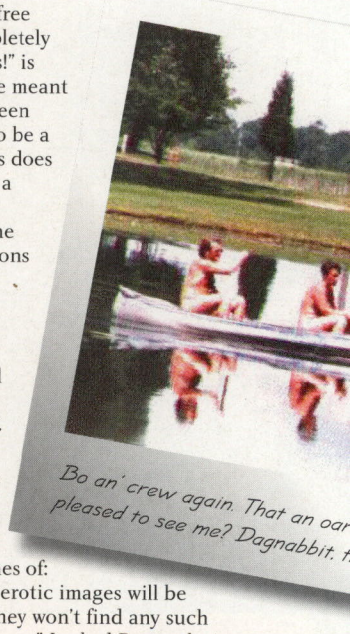
Photos, though, vary little from page to page. They look like any holiday snaps you might press into cellophane-covered album pages, trying fruitlessly to expunge air bubbles – except that everyone in them is dressed down in their birthday suit. You'll see naked people sauntering along beaches, sailing, playing tennis, eating picnics... Things have certainly moved on since the beachball-throwing days of naturism's infancy. One activity, however, seems to crop up again and again with almost obsessive regularity. Volleyball.

Nudists, it seems, find volleyball irresistible, barely pausing to slip off their underwear before sprinting on court. Everywhere you look on the Web they're there, leaping, diving and joyfully swatting. How come?

Neil and Gigi Lenker are the founding members of Naked Volleyball **(http://www.nakedvolleyball.com/).** "Volleyball and tennis both lend themselves to nudism," explains Neil. "Being non-contact sports is one reason. After that, I see different reasons for each sport having its place. Tennis is good if you don't know too many people and want to be self-sufficient. A couple can play a singles game against each other or play doubles against another couple. Volleyball, on the other hand, requires a lot of interaction. Not only must there be lots of organisation within a team, but it also takes organisation to keep teams flowing smoothly on to and off of the court."

"What with straightening out your bra and picking your panties out of your butt, it's a wonder that a girl has any time to play volleyball at all..."

Similar mottos also tend to crop up again and again on nudist pages. "Tan line free zone!" is one. "I'm completely naked under my clothes!" is another. And "If we were meant to be nude, we'd have been born that way!" seems to be a popular naturist joke, as does "A nudist has no fear of a pickpocket!". There are plenty more gems on The Page Of Nudist Quotations **(http://www.cybernude.com/quotes.htm),** but be wary of weak puns exploiting the supposed similarity between the words "nude" and "new". "I've got a brand nude attitude!" and so forth...



Bo an' crew again. That an oar pleased to see me? Dagnabbit.

There's another recurring theme on nudist pages – statements along the lines of: "All persons looking for erotic images will be sadly disappointed, as they won't find any such material within these pages." I asked Rusty what this might mean.

"It really is a non-sexual atmosphere," he explains. "When people who've never been to a nudist facility think of all the naked people, they automatically think it must be a sex-related thing. Because in their minds the only times to be nude are in the shower or when having sex, and nudists aren't always just showering. Why would someone assume it's a sexual thing?"

I don't know. But, reassured nonetheless, I wondered whether going clothes-free in public is something we should all try. Rusty certainly thinks so: "I've always thought that everyone should try it at least once in their life. Don't you sometimes think to yourself, while you're sitting at your desk working, I bet it would feel good to undo my belt?" Well, er... "I've talked to women who are tired of wearing tight things all day, like bras, just because mainstream society wants it that way."

Neil Lenker puts forward an even more persuasive case: "Imagine playing volleyball in a pair of Levis and a sweater on a hot day, and how miserable that

Hey! Ellie Sue! You wanna see a REAL rod? Yeeha!

AND I spent the whole damn week in hospital after Jim's sudden sneezing fit.

would be." Okay. "Then imagine finding you had a pair of shorts and a tank top in the car and changing into them, and how good the breeze and freely-circulating air would feel against your skin." Well, yes. "Well, that's how good it feels to get rid of the last remaining clothes too. The wet T-shirt sticking to your back, keeping your perspiration from evaporating from your skin and cooling your body as God intended it to. The liners in your shorts climbing up your butt crack, irritating and creating rashes around your groin area." Blimey. I, er... "As Gigi said recently, 'What with straightening out your bra and picking your panties out of your butt, it's a wonder that a girl has any time to play volleyball at all...'"

This, I decided, was probably a good point at which to return to my cookery. But, then again, my new friends present a compelling case. And I do have a duty to my readers.

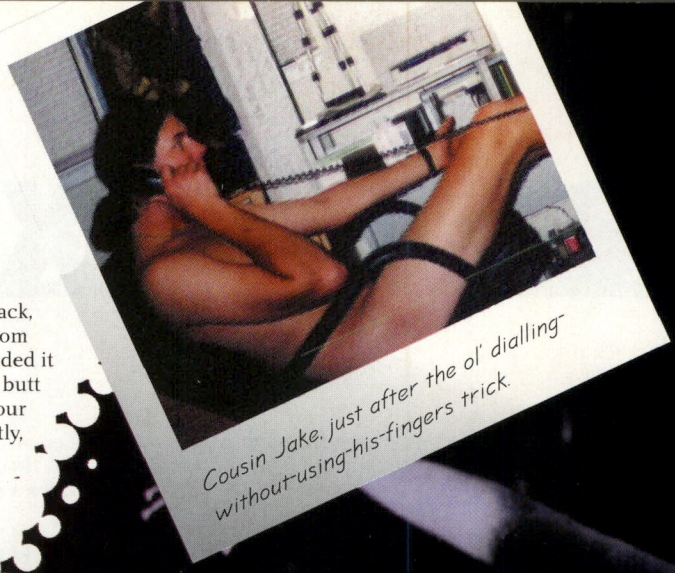
Hold on...

(Rustle.)

Hmm.

Er.

No, on second thoughts, maybe not. And Marks and Spencer would never manage without me.

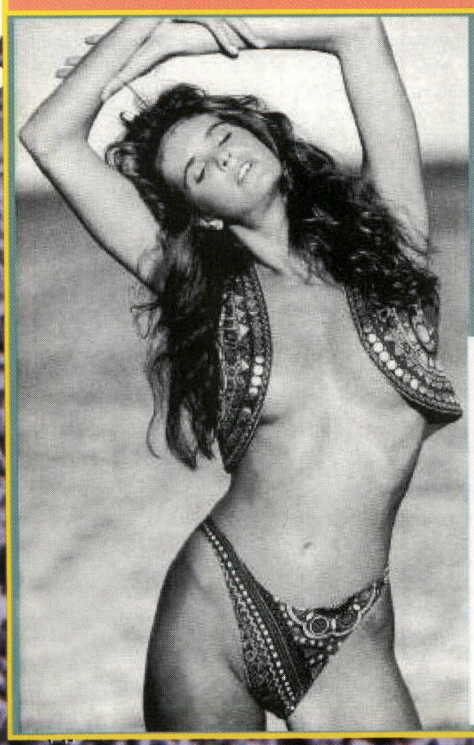


Cousin Jake, just after the ol' dialling-without-using-his-fingers trick.

Getty Images

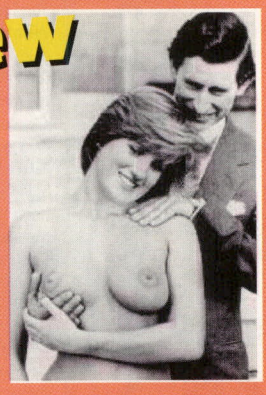
you just
's funny!

The Reluctant Few



Faking a decent celebrity nude may at first appear to be the ultimate in techno trickery, but the process is disarmingly simple. Simply locate a photo of your fave half-undressed celeb (say, Elle McPherson) in a magazine, rip it out and scan it in. Then nab a slab of Pirelli-style soft porn, arbrush out the head using Adobe Photoshop, and, after a quick tinker with the colour palette, there you have it! Instant sadness!

Image from Scoopy's Gateway Of Filth

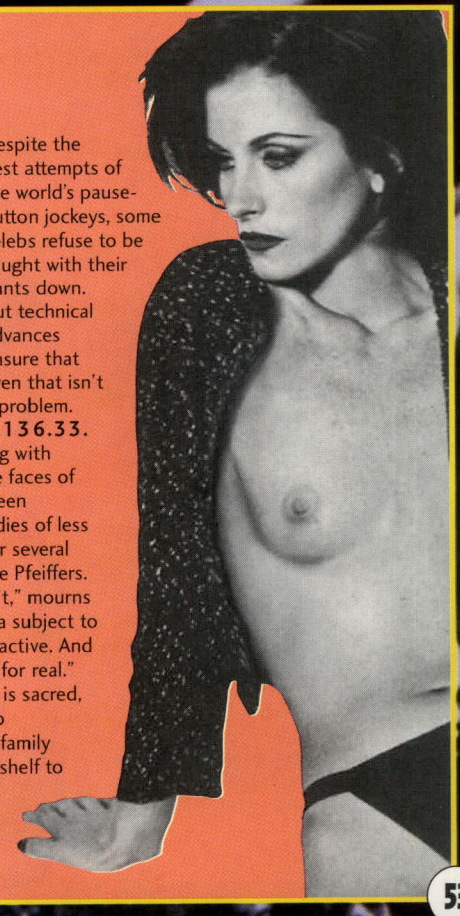


Despite the best attempts of the world's pause-button jockeys, some celebs refuse to be caught with their pants down. But technical advances ensure that even that isn't a problem.

Scoopy's Gateway Of Filth **(207.136.33.27/fake/fake.htm)** is brimming with almost plausible "fake nudes". The faces of stubbornly modest celebs have been transplanted on to the nekkid bodies of less inhibited unknowns. Watch out for several Lady Dis and a number of Michelle Pfeiffers.

"I wish it were true, but it isn't," mourns Scoopy. His criteria for choosing a subject to fake are simple: "She must be attractive. And she must not take off her clothes for real."

Finally, to prove that nothing is sacred, Scoopy also uses the art of photo manipulation to shift the magical family world of Disney from the bottom shelf to the top. At last, we can see Princess Jasmine, Pochahontas and even Tinkerbell as Uncle Walt certainly didn't intend.



Love & Sex

FEELING FRUITY: **LOUISE BROWN**
louisebr@Websters.co.uk

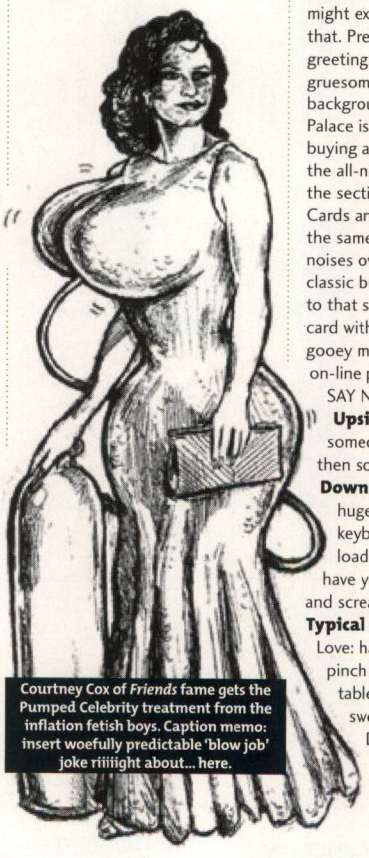
Casual(ty) sex: Crutches and crotches from the alarmingly popular Plaster Page.

CASTING COUCH

Name: PLASTER OF PARadISe
What is it? A veritable haven for "casters", peculiar individuals who get turned on by any part of the anatomy – so long as it's caked in plaster.
Where you'll find it: http://www.txdirect.net/users/caster/castmain.htm
What's it like? Don't pity those old women with bandaged legs on the bus, they're faking it for the thrill of tubigrip. This is a unique fetish that proves compulsive viewing, covering the dubious delights of plaster of paris, fibreglass and even those old-fashioned back braces. The pictures are truly hilarious – look out for those little shoe things that do up with velcro. And the personal ads are just plain scary: "39-year-old Italian wants a full body cast"; "I have a strong desire to be set in a full body cast (including my head) at least for overnight and perhaps a weekend. This would be my first experience"; "46-inch dominatrix with vast experience of casting slaves looks to recruit more"... Best of all, though, has to be the anecdotes. Andy's story of two hookers, one man, and a toe-to-hip cast is gripping stuff.
Upside: A frequently updated site with an absolute wealth of freaky images.
Downside: There aren't enough funny stories.
Typical quote: "I looked down on her beautiful body. She already had a full-length cast on her right leg, but I could easily incorporate that into a hip spica cast, or maybe a full body cast."
Overall: ★★★★

PUCKER UP BUTTERCUP

Name: Aphrodite's Love Palace
What is it? You admire waiters with the big pepper grinders? You like listening to sound files of someone whispering "I love you" in different languages? You'll like this site.
Where you'll find it: http://www.purple.co.uk/purplet/love.html
What's it like? Tamer than you might expect from a title like that. Prepare yourself for cheesy greetings card fonts and gruesomely flowery backgrounds. Aphrodite's Love Palace is about as romantic as buying a box of Milk Tray from the all-night garage. Split into the sections Music, Kissing, Cards and Poetry, you can hear the same woman making kissy noises over and over, e-mail classic but badly spellt poetry to that special person or send a card with an appropriately gooey message. There's even an on-line proposal service. JUST SAY NO.
Upside: It will make someone very happy. But then so do Soda Streams.
Downside: Unless you're a huge fan of casiotone keyboard kitsch, the down-loadable "music of love" will have you clasping your ears and screaming with horror.
Typical quote: "A Recipe for Love: half a cup of affection, a pinch of cuddles, three tablespoons of pure sweetness, a great big kiss. Directions: dim the lights then mix them very slowly together." Bleuch.
Overall: ★★★



Courtney Cox of *Friends* fame gets the Pumped Celebrity treatment from the inflation fetish boys. Caption memo: insert woefully predictable 'blow job' joke riiiiight about... here.

FRISKY FACILE FUN

Name: thrive@sex
What is it? A daily dose of sex chat with quizzes and discussions.
Where you'll find it: http://pathfinder.com/@@XIewbQYAMp3FeGf0/thrive/sex.html
What's it like? Appealing on a simple level to anyone who has a sexual bone in their body, Thrive contains the standard sex fare for young straight people in and out of relationships, including dirty talk, sexual abuse and condom guides. Find out if you're a demon between the sheets and which partner is for you just by answering a few simple questions – but don't expect anything demanding or insightful. The questionnaires change daily, which is excellent news both for self-doubters and arrogant idiots. There's also a good chance of scoring in the Love Lounge.
Upside: Fun presentation of basic sex guidelines.
Downside: The URL looks like a dictionary's exploded.
Typical quote: "Just so you know, more guys are definitely doing it with themselves more often. And more women fall on the less frequent side. So what? No conclusions here, just some good sex trivia."
Overall: ★★★

LOTS OF STUFF YOU NEVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX

Name: Gender And Sexuality
What is it? Stuffed to the brim with intelligent scribblings on every type of sexuality and its place in modern society and culture.
Where you'll find it: http://eng.hss.cmu.edu/gender/
What's it like? A diverse selection of essays for your perusal, featuring such delights as Cheerleaders For Reproduction, Frat Boy Fetishism, Necessity Of Queer Families and Perpetrate My Fist. Surprisingly, these are well-researched, thought-provoking papers that remain entertaining in that "best of the broadsheet Sunday supplements" style. It's certainly a site that demands revisiting, with enough well-edited and carefully-selected content to shake a large stick at.
Upside: Irrational newsgroup ranters have no home here.
Downside: Hit upon it with raging hormones and be mightily disappointed. There's not even a saucy logo in sight.
Typical quote: "She throws her sex in the face of all her perpetrators, and she comes out on top. The slut wins."
Overall: ★★★★

KARMIC CANOODLING

Name: The Nepal Institute
What is it? Tantric sex.
Where you'll find it: http://www.newfrontier.com/nepal/
What's it like? Tantric sex is the kind of thing you get Channel 4 documentaries on. Volley-ball playing men and face-lifted women pretend that the reason they're nude and cross-legged in some mountain retreat is not to cop off at all, but to discover their inner sexual child. Thankfully, there are no pictures of Chuck from Ohio getting hot and bothered here. This site's dedicated to the spiritual side of tantra, embracing the art of meditation and massage in a total sexual and emotional experience. If you thought sex was all about reproduction and/or humiliation, tantra shows you how to do it properly. G-spots, sacred spots and female ejaculant are all a matter of patience and geography, apparently.
Upside: Detailed massage techniques that can be successfully integrated into anyone's lovemaking.
Downside: You might not fancy semen retention.
Typical quote: "After the sensation to urinate passes, either pleasurable or possibly painful feelings will follow both

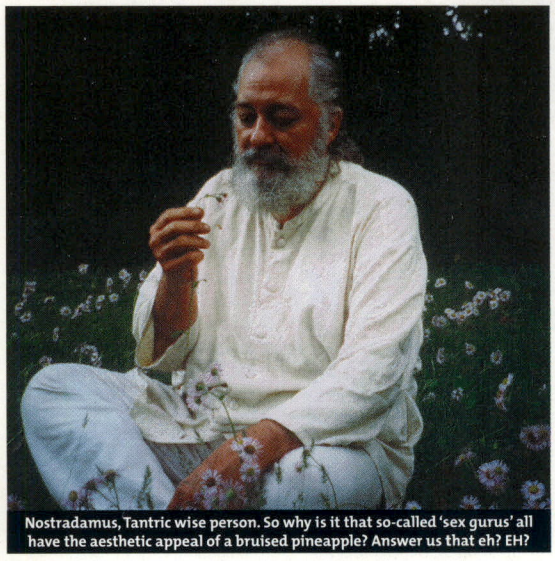
emotionally and physically."
Overall: ★★★★

FLOAT YOUR BOAT

Name: Body Inflation Fetish Home Page
What is it? For lovers of things pneumatic (not just tits).
Where you'll find it: http://members.aol.com/lvkane/index.html
What's it like? Everyone's heard of inflatable dolls – they're a joke, right? Not for these guys. Inflatable clothing, inflatable toys, inflatable people... Site author Luther Kane and his chums love it. Explore one girl's fantasy of being a clown in a circus whose suit inflates. Or just laugh and laugh at how people get turned on by this stuff. As you can imagine, the picture library isn't exactly overflowing (someone send in a video capture of Kenny Everett as Rod Stewart with the inflating backside, *please?)*, but there are some excellent cartoons. The best section (which desperately needs expanding – boom, boom) is Celebrity Cartoon Art, where you can e-mail in a star of your choice to get the inflationary treatment.
Upside: Cindy Crawford before and after inflation is unmissable.
Downside: Light on content.
Typical quote: "A moaning sound escaped her lips; it filled her with desire/To stand there, pressure from within; inflating like a tyre."
Overall: ★★★★

WIRED STEPFORD WIVES

Name: HomeArts KissNet
What is it? We're going to the chapel to get married. Shortly after we will stop having sex so often.
Where you'll find it: http://homearts.com/depts/relat/00dprec1.htm
What's it like? Grounded in the world of married female 30-somethings and their accompanying worries. The emotional features ("How can you tell that he loves you?") and advice for singles are all standard magazine fodder, but there are some unique, albeit lame, interactive features. Create an on-line dedication in the 15K Of Fame section and answer the question of the day at The Pulse, a virtual quiz machine aimed at young wives. Unfortunately, for the largest section of the Internet community, the questions aren't along the lines of "You're an attractive but bored housewife, do you take a young PC-active lover?". Instead, they focus on bitching about your husband's ex-wife or working out for a better body in the bedroom.
Upside: More interesting than those mags you pick up in your GP's waiting room.
Downside: More Stepford Wives than *Cosmopolitan* for most tastes.
Typical quote: "Now you're working from home there's no need for pink slips any more. Unless you put your white ones in with hubby's red socks."
Overall: ★★★


Nostradamus, Tantric wise person. So why is it that so-called 'sex gurus' all have the aesthetic appeal of a bruised pineapple? Answer us that eh? EH?

DO YOU THINK IT'S SEXY?

Name: Reclaiming The Erotic
What is it? A site dedicated to distinguishing between hardcore (dirty filthy yuck) and erotica (posh porn).
Where you'll find it: http://www.rippleeffects.com/index.html
What's it like? An admirable and interesting effort about what different people find sexy and how intimacy is expressed. Encouraged to add your own comments throughout, you can vote on things like the most erotic moment in a film. Passing browsers have also expressed some interesting views on what "fuck" means, but you won't find anything particularly unique or obscene. It's a shame that more people don't have Internet access. As it is, the site's written by some bright individuals, but visited by your average dirty mac-clad netizen.
Upside: A good balance is maintained between information and interaction.
Downside: Comes across as written by people more qualified than they actually are.
Typical quote: "Definitely a verb. A woman saying in any way (whisper, moan and mild yell) 'Fuck me, oh please fuck me' [or] 'Let's fuck' is sexy. 'Fuck you' isn't."
Overall: ★★★

ASK AND YE SHALL FIND FAULT

Name: Isadora Alman's Sexuality Forum
What is it? Dubious sexual wisdom.
Where you'll find it: http://www.askisadora.com/
What's it like? Why do women cry after sex? Apparently it's to do with nearly touching the soul of another. What crap. Isadora's Forum is full of rubbishy comments and anecdotes that are dotted around in short stranded paragraphs and organised without any traceable logic. Isadora, stick to answering questions that you know about, stop treating men like they're idiots and stop speaking *for* women when you don't know what you're talking about. This woman says she's a certified sexologist; heaven help the place where she qualified.
Upside: There's some useful advice hiding in the nonsense.
Downside: Even the ABC of sex isn't in alphabetical order.
Typical quote: "Remove the paper and tobacco from a cigarette and place only the filter in a cupped hand. On top of this pour about a tablespoon of fingernail polish remover. Close the hand and shake. Presto! A handful of semen."
Overall: ★

HotSpot!

Name: Annie Sprinkle's Home Page
What is it? Sex to relieve boredom and improve concentration. She saved a man from an asthma attack once, you know.
Where you'll find it: http://www.infi.net/~heck/sprinkleshow.html
What's it like? If you thought postfeminism was a no-show, then visit this page full of sexy sisterly words. Annie's arrived at this affirmation of the sexual self via a weird route, encompassing work in the sex industry, feminist teachings and a strong interest in spirituality. Annie's behind you all the way with insider knowledge (sperm is a soothing balm for mosquito bites) and inspirational words such as "40 Reasons Why Whores Are My Heroes". It's stuffed with gags and includes a superb guide on how to inspect your cervix, which features full colour pictures of the neck of her own womb. Despite the odd foray into the biological, this is the thinking hedonist's dream.
Upside: Wildly liberating.
Downside: There are only so many times you can hear the word cervix and remain pleased and surprised.
Typical quote: "Sex isn't a sin. Sex is a good deed. Give the needy an occasional mercy shag."

POKER SESSIONS

Annie's latest project is her very own Pleasure Activist Playing Cards – a postporn take on those "erotic cards" you used to buy along with a flick comb and bangers on the school trip to France. Featuring 56 of her favourite feisty grrls, here's a selection of the kind of company Annie keeps. A rum(my) bunch if ever there was.

Kembra Pfahler
Sexual Surrealist
Oddball fact: when performing with her band *The Voluptuous Horror Of Karen Black*, Kembra often does a headstand while a sexy "bunny" breaks paint-filled eggs on her nether regions.

Susie Bright
Sexpert Scribe
Oddball fact: she regularly receives bomb threats for her radical advocation of porn.

Kelly Webb
White Trash Courtesan
Oddball fact: Kelly plays the trumpet in American all-girl group *Thrust* and is prone to serial stripping in public.

Lily Burana
Renaissance Vamp
Oddball fact: editor of omnisexual magazine *The Taste Of Latex*, Lily's body has been pierced over 25 times.

Katharine Gates
Pin-up Publisher
Oddball fact: trained in anthropology, epigraphy and art theory, Katharine is an independent curator, art critic and firearms enthusiast. Which is nice.

Sport

MR GRISTLE: **MARTIN AXFORD**

Ukbarney@aol.com

THAT PETROL EMOTION

Name: Top Gear
What is it? The BBC mag gets on-line.
Where you'll find it: http://www.topgear.com
What's it like? A wet dream for petrolheads, but not because of the interactive ride with Jeremy Clarkson – the gimmicky Supertest feature enables you to watch movie clips of a car performing, complete with authentic engine sounds and a speedometer. What really makes this worth visiting is the News section. Updated daily, you get the top stories on cars and bikes, not to mention the Formula 1 scene and access to a fair-sized archive of news stories. Grand Prix fans will be pleased to know that the popular Fantasy F1 competition is on-line too.
Upside: Track down your ideal supermodel from a database of 4,000 cars.
Downside: Since when has the Skoda Felicia been regarded as a supermodel?
Typical quote: "The new Porsche Boxster struts into the arena, does a somersault over the ropes and lands bang in the middle of the ring, ready to do battle with the Mercedes SLK, TVR's Griffith and all-comers."
Overall: ★★★

COME TO KNOW ARM

Name: Arm Wrestling – United States ArmSports
What is it? A celebration of arm wrestling, wrist wrestling and (wows all round) 'Indian wrestling'.
Where you'll find it: http://www.armwrestling.com/
What's it like? Unintentionally hilarious. Remember the time some big drunk bloke decided that the only alternative to not smashing your face in was to arm wrestle you? It appears the Americans consider this age-old means of settling an argument to be a sport. Read the history of arm wrestling, swot up on the the rules, marvel at the world's best left-handed arm wrestler and stay abreast of the exciting arm wrestling events happening this summer. Then curse your luck when you realise they're all taking place in the States.
Upside: Tell that big drunk bloke to maintain contact with the peg when the pin is made.
Downside: He'll probably punch you instead.
Typical quote: "It's a pictorial and descriptive discussion of the major outside move, usually called the top roll, which was popularised by Sylvester Stallone's movie *Over The Top.*"
Overall: ★

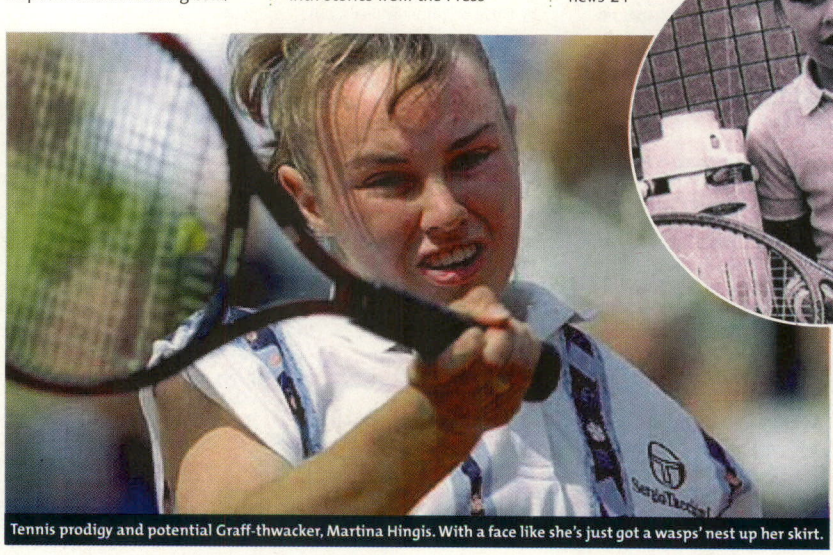
A QUESTION OF SPORT

Name: Sportszine UK
What is it? A laddish fanzine keeping you informed on a range of sports.
Where you'll find it: http://www.sportszineuk.co.uk/
What's it like? With nine sports to choose from, including football, rugby, windsurfing and horse racing, most fans are well catered for here. Each section features a series of relevant links to other sites, which is handy, but hardly imaginative. Compensating for any lack of originality, however, is a news section kept up to the minute with stories from the Press Association. And the Swimsuit feature brings you the titillating sport of Nikki Taylor, Elle MacPherson and Cindy Crawford trying to keep their breasts inside their cossies. An equally gratuitous gimmick is the pub, where you can meet the barmaid (groan) and post spurious messages on the board. What larks.
Upside: Up-to-date sporting news 24 hours a day.
Downside: Not much by way of original content.
Typical quote: "You've had a lovely time looking at the girls, now get back to the sport!"
Overall: ★★★

Sportszine UK's Swimsuit Gallery: not entirely necessary.

SWISS ROLL WITH IT

Name: Martina Hingis – Princess of the WTA!
What is it? You know when fans create sites because they're under the misguided impression that they might get a shag out of it? Yeah, well...
Where you'll find it: http://martina.webmrkt.com/
What's it like? When fans pay tribute to their heroes on-line, the results can be a tad sad . Site authors Andy and Markus certainly seem to be nudging at the barriers of stalker-style infatuation. But apart from the tedious fences of exclamation marks punctuating their commentary on Martina's not entirely unexpected rise to prominence, this is an exemplary tennis site. There are match reports, details of her forthcoming tournaments and all sorts of news about the little Swiss lass. The photo gallery is also a commendable collection, providing shots from her childhood right up to her most recent tournaments. And the links to more Hingis home pages signifies that Andy and Markus aren't alone in their sex quest.
Upside: Impress your mates by correcting Sue Barker at Wimbledon this year: "Actually, Martina knocked Sanchez-Vicario out of the 1996 US Open 6:1, 3:6, 6:4, not..."
Downside: The section entitled Where Martina Lives. Do you really need to be shown where Switzerland is?
Typical quote: "My Doctor would say: no 'best of five' matches any more, Markus! It's too much for your Heart! :-)"
Overall: ★★★



Tennis prodigy and potential Graff-thwacker, Martina Hingis. With a face like she's just got a wasps' nest up her skirt.

SKIDS ARE US

Name: F1 World
What is it? A little something for the weekend. When there's a Grand Prix taking place, anyway.
Where you'll find it: http://www.f1world.com/
What's it like? Considerably better than Lola's dismal performance this year. Or Damon Hill's, for that matter. After each Grand Prix, F1 World devotes itself to the next one, keeping you abreast of the practice, qualifying and race times for each driver. Gen up on the latest news, previews and reviews at the Atlas F1 News site, and stay in the know with weather reports and betting odds. There's even a map of the track assessing where drivers are most likely to skid off. The Championship archive, which dates back to 1989, is nothing short of impressive, while the F1 Simulations and Links Database sections polish off a generally awesome site.
Upside: You needn't put up with ITV's coverage of the Grand Prix season.
Downside: You can't forget that ITV's got coverage of the Grand Prix season.
Typical quote: "Both Panis and Hill only made one stop in the race on the 'soft' Bridgestone compound – they proved to be

much more durable and grippy than Goodyears."
Overall: ★★★★★

DROWNING PINTS

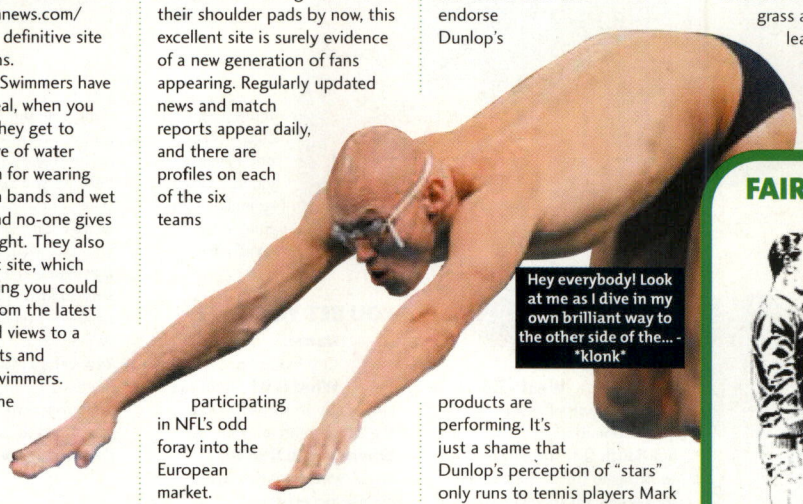
Name: Swimnews On-line
Where you'll find it: http://www.swimnews.com/
What is it? The definitive site for swimming fans.
What's it like? Swimmers have a pretty good deal, when you think about it. They get to exercise their love of water sports and fetish for wearing rubber caps, arm bands and wet suits in public and no-one gives it a second thought. They also get this fantastic site, which features everything you could possibly want, from the latest results, news and views to a calendar of events and biographies of swimmers. An offshoot of the magazine *SWIMnews*, you also get to peruse articles from the latest issue, which is irritating if you happen to subscribe to the printed version, but hey, we're not complaining.
Upside: No sign of annoying tots who wee in the pool.
Downside: As pleasant to look at as a snotty-nosed schoolkid.
Typical quote: "Popov, having recovered from the knife wounds without any lasting damage, has settled well into his preparation for the European Championships in August."
Overall: ★★★★

LEAGUE ON ITS OWN

Name: WorldLeague.com
What is it? The only site dedicated to the World League of American Football.
Where you'll find it: http://www.WorldLeague.com/
What's it like? American football was briefly in fashion in Britain's playgrounds during the '80s. Since most of its then followers will have grown out of their shoulder pads by now, this excellent site is surely evidence of a new generation of fans appearing. Regularly updated news and match reports appear daily, and there are profiles on each of the six teams participating in NFL's odd foray into the European market.
The highlight of this site is the live audio feature, which covers one match per each week – ideal if you can't make it to Barcelona to watch the Monarchs play the Dragons.
Upside: It's American Football without the Americans.
Downside: No cheerleaders.
Typical quote: "Kitna hit Sheddrick Wilson with a 19-yard scoring strike with 3:40 left in the first quarter to give Barcelona (1–0) a 7–3 lead. Hicks' touchdown 5:05 into the second quarter extended the advantage to 14–3."
Overall: ★★★★

MAKING A RACKET

Name: Dunlop Sports On-line
What is it? An advert for one of Britain's best-loved sports equipment manufacturers.
Where you'll find it: http://www.dunlopsports.com/
What's it like? A bit surreal. Either find out all about Dunlop's products, which is immensely tedious, or read up on how the professional golfers and tennis stars who endorse Dunlop's products are performing. It's just a shame that Dunlop's perception of "stars" only runs to tennis players Mark Philippoussis and Wayne Ferreira and golfer Frank Urban Zoeller Jr. Want to hear about Philippoussis's 142mph record-breaking serve? You'll be happy here, then.
Upside: Includes hints and tips on how to get into playing golf and tennis.
Downside: You'll be expected to use Dunlop equipment.
Typical quote: "You'll probably be so fired up after checking out our gear that you'll want to rush right out and plunk down the money!" See?
Overall: ★★



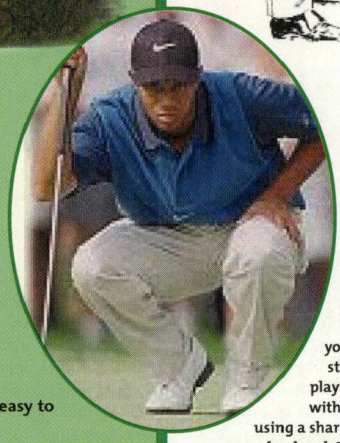
HELL FOR LEATHER

Name: rec.sport.cricket
What is it? Howuszeee! Howuszat! Howusabout gettingonwithit?
Where you'll find it: Usenet: rec.sport.cricket
What's it like? Arguing about cricket surely can't warrant the number of postings this newsgroup receives. After all, the point of cricket is that you get a decent suntan and drink gin while lounging around, lulled by the click of the scoreboard, the smell of the grass and the sound of leather on willow. But all sports have their share of obsessives. Here you'll find fans debating issues like drug testing and fielding positions alongside numerous "Who won…?" postings.
Upside: Should you wish to discover the first class batting average of Mike Gatting in 1986, you have friends.
Downside: Are these the kind of friends you want?
Typical quote: "Can anyone tell me why the Aussies are wearing their green test helmets for the current ODI series, not their usual yellow ODI helmets?"
Overall: ★★

HotSpot!

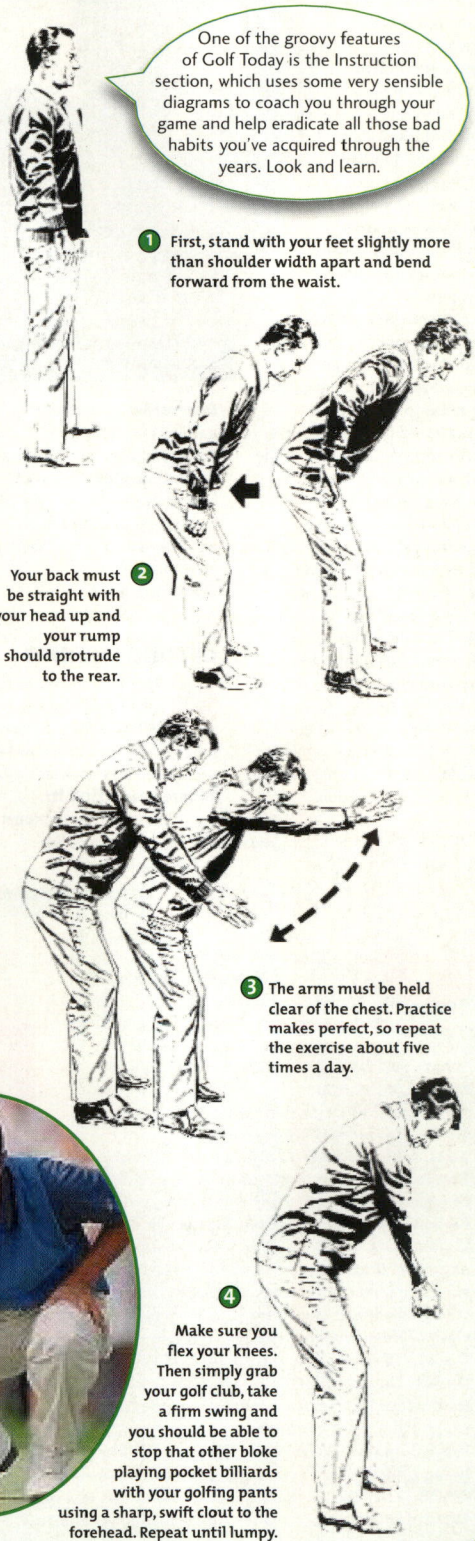
GOLF TODAY

Name: Golf Today
What is it? A golf magazine delivered to your screen daily.
Where you'll find it: http://www.golftoday. co.uk/
What's it like? Wearing a Pringle jumper, baggy pants and socks covered in multi-coloured diamonds? You'll be wanting another site, then. Stylish, dynamic and easy to navigate, Golf Today is as good as they come. News stories pour in throughout the day, and there are features, opinion columns, interviews with big golfing names, biographies of players and previews of tournaments. including a separate section devoted to the Ryder Cup. You can also work on your golfing technique and find out about golf schools locally and abroad, while the ecologically aware can peruse a piece on the effect of golf courses on the environment. Top stuff.
Upside: If golf's your passion, look no farther.
Downside: Did someone actually use the dreadful pun "information fairway"?
Typical quote: "Check your position in front of a mirror often, as it's extremely easy to move out of position and bad habits are developed quickly."



FAIRWAY SWINGALONG

One of the groovy features of Golf Today is the Instruction section, which uses some very sensible diagrams to coach you through your game and help eradicate all those bad habits you've acquired through the years. Look and learn.



1. First, stand with your feet slightly more than shoulder width apart and bend forward from the waist.
2. Your back must be straight with your head up and your rump should protrude to the rear.
3. The arms must be held clear of the chest. Practice makes perfect, so repeat the exercise about five times a day.
4. Make sure you flex your knees. Then simply grab your golf club, take a firm swing and you should be able to stop that other bloke playing pocket billiards with your golfing pants using a sharp, swift clout to the forehead. Repeat until lumpy.

Footy

ON THE BENCH: **BEN LYTTLETON**
blyttleton@futurenet.co.uk

Romario, there. De-breadcrumbing a tablecloth.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Name: The FIFA page
What is it? A shrine to football's governing body.
Where you'll find it: http://www.fifa.com/index.html
What's it like? If it's international football that stirs your cocoa, Mr Havelange and his chums come up trumps with this no-countries-barred foray into the world's most popular sport. Much of the content concerns World Cup '98 and there's an orgy of up-to-date results and news. Did you know, for example, that Luis Roberto Alves Zague scored World Cup France '98's 500th goal (yes, already), in the 44th minute of the Mexico 3 Honduras 1 match? There's loads more too: news on all major football issues, more info on the history of the World Cup than you could possibly need, and a massive photo library from USA '94. You can dig up the FIFA referees' directory, a list of every World Cup mascot, and the official FIFA/Coca-Cola World Rankings. Well, laughing at the Welsh never hurt anyone.
Upside: Gen up on the state of *every* nation.
Downside: No sign of any garbled rant from the aforementioned Mr Havelange.
Typical quote: "Own goals have always been a feature of football. But do they really exist? And if so, what exactly is an own goal?"
Overall: ★★★★

GETTING CHINNED

Name: The "We Hate Jimmy Hill" Page
What is it? Vehement rantings from Scottish fans fed up with the Chinmeister's drivel.
Where you'll find it: http://www.ontonet.be/~ont082/tar_jim.html
What's it like? Football is a game of opinions. And if these individuals feel strongly enough to dedicate their time and effort to slagging off the man who put the chin into chinwag, then fair enough. But applauding the fellow who "gobbed on" Hill seems out of order. And reproducing the Jimmy ditty ("We hate Jimmy Hill... He's A Poof") in 34 different languages, including Thai, Serbo-Croat and Gaelic, is plain childish. Shouldn't think Hill's too bothered about it, though. He'll take it on the chin...
Upside: His chin is huge.
Downside: But there are no pictures of it.
Typical quote: "Slovak – Nenavidime Jimmiho Hilla... Je teply, je teply! Zulu – Siya zonda Jimmy igquma... Ungu Ngqingili, ungu ngqingili!"
Overall: ★★

Just be glad we haven't shown you what's going on behind number 4...

YOU BET YOUR LIFE

Name: City Index: Soccer
What is it? A football fan's guide to spread betting, the latest trend in gambling.
Where you'll find it: http://www.cityindex.co.uk/prices/soccer.htm
What's it like? Lots of numbers that somehow, when assembled in the right order, can make you very rich. Stake your wedge on how many points you think the footy club of your choice will gain in season '97 to '98. If the quote for the Reds is 63 to 66 points and you think they'll exceed 66 points, you can "buy" the points for any price. Call your stake a tenner and fast forward to the end of the season. Liverpool have 70 points, so you're £40 up (£10 for every point gained). Well done you. But, had they got 55 points, you'd be £80 down. It's riskier than fixed odds betting because you can lose a lot more than your initial stake. Prices change daily and you can close your bet whenever you want.
Upside: Win loadsa cash!
Downside: The morality of gambling still rankles with me. When I lose.
Typical quote: "Prices may fluctuate against your interest. Only speculate with money you can afford to lose."
Overall: ★★★

EURO-FLASH

Name: International Soccer Server
What is it? All the latest fixtures, results and leagues from around Europe.
Where you'll find it: http://dmiwww.cs.tut.fi/riku/soccer.html
What's it like? Anorak heaven. A regular dose of stats from Austria to Yugoslavia, with links to oodles of club home pages. Forest fans can be cheered by the news that Attila, the club bottom of the Moldovan League, has an even worse record than them. After 17 games, the poor Attilans have scraped one point, scoring six and conceding 65 goals along the way. So cheer up, Psycho! As a service for football fans, the International Soccer Server is unsurpassed. The presentation is off-putting, but the amount of info is manna for your football cognoscente.
Upside: The Croatian clubs' home pages are in English.
Downside: The French clubs' home pages are in French.
Typical quote: "Elvis's *It's Now Or Never* is the motto of the richest football club in Bulgaria, CSKA Sofia."
Overall: ★★★★

HotSpot!

Name: No Sex, No Money, Just Football FC
What is it? Fans who realise there's more to the sport than winning. Or losing.
Where you'll find it: http://www.tis.co.uk/football/index.htm
What's it like? Dedicated to football humour, No Sex, No Money makes an effort to crack jokes, often crap ones, at the game's expense. But, like the four-year-old cousin who you're fond of in spite of yourself, it's actually both endearing and funny. Regular features on ugly players from the past sit comfortably alongside wacky news stories from the present. Like the one about the Brazilian coach who ran on the pitch, took off his shirt and pulled a moony in disgust at the referee's decision (the goal stood). Make sure you check out the definitive clash of the commentators between John Motson and Barry Davies – it's irreverent, passionate and completely tasteless.
Upside: No club affiliations, which means NO-ONE IS SAFE.
Downside: The incessant, elbow-nudging "Laugh at me! Laugh at me now!" approach.
Typical quote: "We set aside the merits of Motty's Midlands twang against Bazza's cultured drone and devised these categories to decide who's the best: usefulness in a fight; fanny magnetism; sartorial elegance; alcoholic capacity."

NO SEX, NO MONEY, JUST FOOTBALL

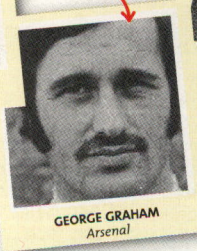
KITS OUT FOR THE LADS

Forget about Redknapp, Beckham, James and those other preening mummy's boys. Back when football was a game and not a modelling merry-go-round, players would do anything for a publicity shot. Warning: make sure you haven't just eaten before you feast your eyes on the less beautiful side of The Beautiful Game...

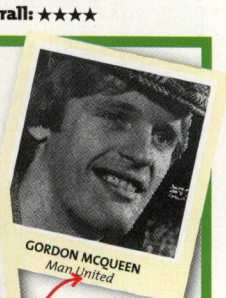
HOWARD KENDALL
Stoke

Played for Blackburn, Everton and Stoke: ugly as sick, even with a wig on.

Played for Millwall and Arsenal: give you ten grand to shave it off...



GEORGE GRAHAM
Arsenal



GORDON MCQUEEN
Man United

Played for Man Utd: Jesus Christ, do we really need to see that?

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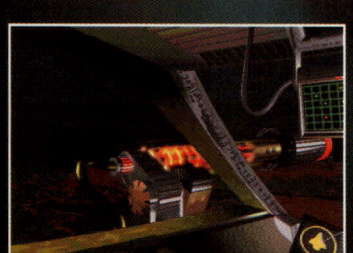

ASTROS

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Travel

SLAPPING ON THE SUNBLOCK: **NICK MERRITT**
nmerritt@futurenet.co.uk

CLUB CLASS

Name: Club 18–30
What is it? An excuse for young people to spread pubic lice on an international basis.
Where you'll find it: http://www.club18-30.co.uk
What's it like? Whether it's vomiting on sun-kissed beaches, picking a fight with your best mate, shagging 'some bird' with a face like a cracked pavement or microwaving your English blubber into leather, Club18–30 has something to offer you. Smart idea then to include a Reunions link on this Web site, in case you decide to rekindle that holiday romance. And good thinking to provide resort and hotel guides to Tenerife, Florida and Ibiza – all the best military campaigns are planned in advance. When Churchill said we'd fight them on the beaches, he didn't mean theirs and he didn't mean at 4am, but it's a larf, innit? You're only young once and all that – although you'll be a lot older after one of these holidays.
Upside: Lots of pictures of hunks and strumpets.
Downside: Too much yoofy slang, dammit.
Typical quote: "Rammed tight to the night. Wall-to-wall babes lookin' at blokes lookin' at babes. The biggest gig in the Med. This is a more happenin' Hot House than an allotment full of tomatoes." Riiiight.
Overall: ★★★

FAWLTY TOWERS

Name: TravelWeb
What is it? A hotel and flight reservation site.
Where you'll find it: http://www.travelweb.com
What's it like? Stained carpets, mouldering lice-ridden beds and chambermaids with larceny in their eyes. There's little joy to be had from deciding which hotel to stay in, but this site might take the pain out of booking that holiday. Want a hotel for two weeks? Specify where in Europe or the USA you want to stay and what amenities you require, and TravelWeb can make your reservation. European hotels aren't as well represented as promised, but most of the major chains are here. You can also book your flight from a choice of more than 380 airlines and keep track of the latest flight information.
Upside: A well-presented site that does what it says.
Downside: Doesn't actually have hotel details for all the countries it lists.
Typical quote: "We have a restaurant and lounge on the premises of the hotel. The pool is open until late hours."
Overall: ★★★

Fear and loaning in Las Vegas: Satan's playground slithers on-line.

SPEEDY GONZALES

Name: Mexico
What is it? Sombreros, tequila, red hot chilli peppers, unfeasibly large insects...
Where you'll find it: http://mexico-travel.com/
What's it like? How can anyone who's seen *A Fist Full Of Dollars* not want to go to Mexico? Gun fights, women's heaving bosoms straining against tattered red dresses and Mescal Tequila drunk straight from the bottle... Fantastic. Being the Web page for the Mexican tourist board, you find pretty much what you'd expect – lots of nice pictures of archeological remains, beaches, cultural tours and so on. It's far better, however, than your average tourist site, and there are links to business opportunities, which is smart thinking, what with the state of the peso.
Upside: Find out all about Mexico's history and culture.
Downside: Cockroaches and the like.
Typical quote: "In the Northeast region of Chiapas sits the market town of Ocosingo, which can easily be reached by Highway 199, making for an extraordinarily beautiful ride through mountains and jungle. "
Overall: ★★★★

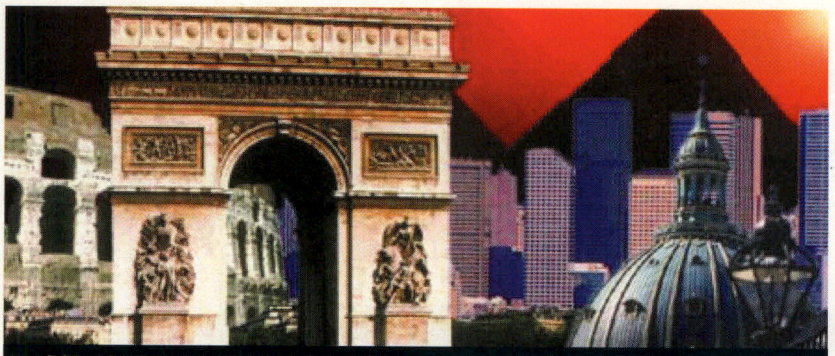
"I hope you don't mind me sitting next to you on such a long journey, but if you could be a nice young man and hold on to my colostomy bag while I peel the plaster off my septic ankle that'd be just super... Like a slice of my garlic flan?"

TIGER ECONOMY

Name: Travel Asia
What is it? Plan your route around the Asian sub-continent.
Where you'll find it: http://www.travelasianet.com/
What's it like? Travel Asia aims to bring you all the fun of the real place while sitting in front of your monitor, but that's nerds for you. You'll find guides to about a third of Asia here – mostly SE Asia, unfortunately, although popular traveller destinations like Vietnam, Thailand and Singapore are covered. Mind you, it's good for going into detail. Hell, it's even got the telephone number of the local nick in Ho Chi Minh City. How's that for service?
Upside: Comprehensive coverage of each listed country.
Downside: But not enough countries are featured. Hopefully they'll update it soon.
Typical quote: "Vietnam has strict drug regulations. Marijuana is cheap and easily available but users are severely punished if caught."
Overall: ★★★

GOING PLACES?

Name: UK Travel Agents
What is it? The usual time-wasting abuse of your intelligence.
Where you'll find it: http://www.mmm.co.uk/netkey/travbank/
What's it like? It's a wet Saturday afternoon in Sutton and you fancy booking your holiday. The money's in your pocket and you're ready to blow it on a fortnight in the sunshine. Rather than face the boredom of trawling your local high street, you log on to this site. Simply plug in the first letters of your post code and the search engine will throw up details of whatever travel companies are in your area. Unfortunately, with a mere 700 entries in its database, you're better off looking in *Yellow Pages*. The site's one redeeming feature is that you can link to various travel companies' home pages. But most of their pages are out of date too. Someone get their act together, *pleeease*.
Upside: Great, if you like dull corporate home pages.



From left to right: L'Arc De Triumph, St Paul's Cathedral, the Egyptian Pyramids and, um, The Barking Lamppost Of Ipswich?

Downside: Even more fruitless than spending your lunch hours queuing at the travel agent's.
Typical quote: "Due to the success of Travelbank, currently over 700 entries (a 100K document), we provide this search engine to shorten the down-load time."
Overall: ★

INFO FREAKO

Name: InfoHub
What is it? A good starting point for general travel information.
Where you'll find it: http://www.infohub.com/
What's it like? "Welcome to the most comprehensive travel guide on the World Wide Web," boasts the first line. Oh yeah? A challenge like that is just asking to be put to the test. But when a site can offer a link to Things To Do In North Korea (one of the most closed societies on this here planet), you're forced to concede that they might just be right. Unfortunately, the link was down – probably the victim of a North Korean assassination squad. InfoHub can nevertheless gen you up on some of the obscurist holiday destinations imaginable. Thinking of nipping over to civil war-torn Burundi? Check out the hotel recommendations. Fancy Uzbekistan? Read about it here first. Impressed? You should be.
Upside: Wide ranging and surprisingly useful...
Downside: A little dry and statistics oriented – more suited for pioneers, spies and illegal immigrants than fun-seeking holiday makers.
Typical quote: "Life expectancy at birth: total population – 59.58 years; male – 58.23 years; female – 60.99 years." Yemen statistics.
Overall: ★★★

ITALIAN STALLIONS

Name: Travel Europe
What is it? For anyone considering a trip to the Continent this summer.
Where you'll find it: http://www.traveleurope.it/
What's it like? An Italian site, there's inevitably an emphasis on locations to visit in Italy, but the rest of Europe gets a look-in too – even the Isle of Man. Mind you, for a nation so proud of its reputed sense of style, the site designer hasn't half cooked up a stinker. Purple links on a blue starry background. Need we say more?
Upside: Includes travel and city guides and links for kids.
Downside: The Italian cookery section was unavailable. Pah.
Typical quote: "It was a diamond seeding, which were springing more light than Paris moon. I'm not saying our moon's not worth: it is a pale beauty, which melancholy talks to reason more directly than Italian's." Hmm...
Overall: ★★★

VINCENT VEGAS

Name: Las Vegas Leisure Guide
What is it? Fear and loathing for the bank manager.
Where you'll find it: http://www.pcap.com/
What's it like? Planning to roast yourself on the beaches of Ibiza? Maybe taking a four-week tour of India? Or perhaps you're taking the kids to Disneyland? How about trying Disneyland for adults instead? Hustle with the boys, bump shoulders with the Syndicate, chew cigars, play cards, lose a fortune, take drugs and order whatever you want in the city where money can buy you anything. Yup, we're talking about Vegas, and this is where you should start. Authentic right down to the tasteless yellow banner headlines, Las Vegas Leisure Guide will tell you the best places to go and the best ways to lose your money.
Upside: "Seven card stud, fours wild, high-low split."
Downside: The amount of money you could blow.
Typical quote: "Many of our readers probably watched their televisions anxiously New Year's Eve 1996 to see pictures from Las Vegas of hundreds of thousands of people watching the fantastic eight-minute fireworks display followed by the implosion of the Hacienda."
Overall: ★★★

BOOK HIM, DANNO

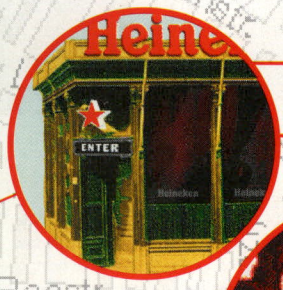
Name: Internet Travel Network
What is it? Your friendly cybertravel agent.
Where you'll find it: http://www.itn.net/
What's it like? You've trawled the Web and have whittled down your choices to roughing it in North Korea or blackjack in Las Vegas. It's time to stop dreaming and book the thing. Unlike the UK Travel Agents site, Travel Network really can make organising your holiday painless. You can book and pay for flights to anywhere you want. The only worry you might have is that age old Web-based problem of handing over your credit card details to a bunch of strangers. Still, the site's been going a couple of years now and no-one's been busted; so you should be fine.
Upside: It's a great idea that deserves to work.
Downside: Dodgy design.
Typical quote: "We regard your privacy with the utmost respect! We make a living by providing quality services to the citizens of the Internet, not by compromising or exploiting them." Phew.
Overall: ★★★★

HotSpot!

Name: World Travel
What is it? Your all-in-one travel guide.
Where you'll find it: http://www.world-travel-net.co.uk/
What's it like? Life on the road, eh? The adventure, the romance, the lost passports, the terrified haggling with immigration officials, the deportation orders... Nothing like it in the world. Okay, that sounds negative, but sometimes the hardest thing about travelling is simply deciding where to go. In which case, you want to plug this address straight into your browser. Frankly, I've never seen such a comprehensive Internet site that wasn't devoted to Teri Hatcher's bedtime habits. There are guides to airlines, hotels, cities, currencies, car rental and weather right across the globe, and you can even find out about job opportunities in world travel.
Upside: Single-handedly redefines the meaning of "comprehensive".
Downside: An overwhelming quantity of info. Good job it's easy to navigate.
Typical quote: "This six-page guide with route maps describes a walk taking in famous Bath landmarks and buildings important in Jane Austen's life."

NOT JUST SEX, DRUGS AND DRINK

Amsterdam: great city, lovely people, and deserves a mini-tour...



Unwind after the ferry journey with a (ahem) 'relaxing cigarette'.

Gawp at the friendly locals in the infamous Red Light District.

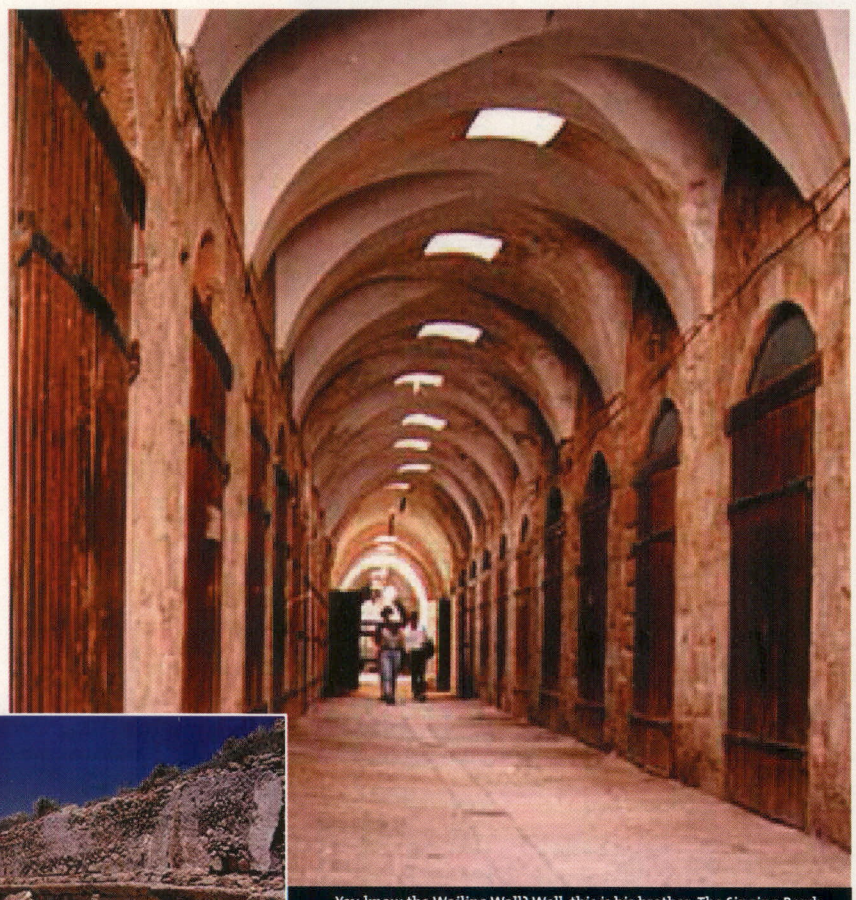
But if you don't fancy the sex or smokes, why not take in some proper culture? Go on. Dare you.

Society & Culture

MEDIA STUDIES: **MIKE GOLDSMITH**
mgoldsmith@futurenet.co.uk

URL COMMUNICATION

Name: Human Rights – A Voice For All
What is it? Web in "used very seriously" shocker!
Where you'll find it: http://www.greysky.demon.co.uk
What's it like? It has a grey background, it doesn't have much by way of photos and there are only a few pages worth of text. Yet Human Rights is utilising precisely what the Net is best at: low-cost mass communication. Just imagine if you were rendered helpless through an illness. Now imagine that the people who care about you are prevented from seeing you because someone else has the legal right to control your life. Created by Jane Wigley-Smith for her personal campaign, the plights of Richard and Karen are tragic ones that require reading to fully appreciate. Karen's aim is to to collect 25,000 names with which to petition her MP. Visit the site and, if you agree with her, e-mail your support.
Upside: A genuinely worthy use of Web space.
Downside: An inevitably and understandably one-sided story.
Typical quote: "A patient should be enabled to live until he dies, at his own maximum potential, performing to the limit of his physical activity and mental capacity, with control and independence wherever possible." Strong stuff.
Overall: ★★★



You know the Wailing Wall? Well, this is his brother: The Singing Porch.

LIVIN' IT LARGE

Name: Fat Person's Home Page
What is it? The page that puts the width back into bandwidth etc.
Where you'll find it: http://www.io.com/~joeobrin/fat.html
What's it like? Joe Obrin is one confused chappie. One minute he's proud of his spare tyres ("Fat is not a four letter word..."), the next he's claiming that the only reason fat people don't exercise is due to being "regularly harassed and coerced by their doctors, their families, and the media". It's an opinionated – if dubious – argument, but the site's worth visiting for the links you'll find there. Look out for Fat Grrl's "'zine for fat dykes", guilt-removing health stats and a subtle little movie review entitled *'The Nutty Professor* Glorifies Bigotry'. Believe it – the fat fightback starts here. After a sandwich.
Upside: Say it loud, I like a Pop Tart and I'm proud.
Downside: You've just missed the chance to pig out on the Fifth Annual International No Diet Day.
Typical quote: "It's no more an insult to call someone fat than it is to call them short, or blonde, or black. Being fat is not a character flaw, it is not a sin, and it is not a sign of mental deficiency."
Overall: ★★★

"THAT'S *SO* UNFAIR!"

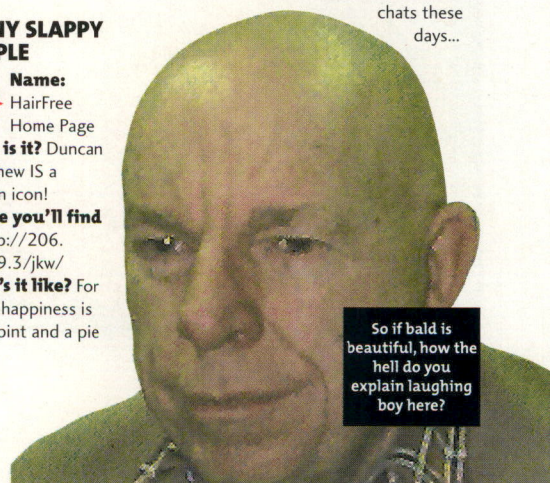
Name: Teen Home Page
What is it? Highest five, spunky home boy, hanging am I with The Kids, yes?
Where you'll find it: http://www.cloud9.net/~thorpy/TEEN.HTML
What's it like? So jaw-droppingly naff, it could almost be a wind-up. Written by some American brat, it's a hypertext listing of what's fool and what's cool for today's Ferris Bueller. So what's down? Dressing like a preppie and grooving to Alanis Morissette after a hard day's rollerblading, unsurprisingly, but study the accompanying reports and you'll find madness everywhere. Canoeing is "an exciting sport to play", CK1 is "too popular to explain", pretending to be a vampire is a "fun masquerade" and US mall rats still get funky to *The Police*. The youth of America have gone bonkers in the nut and here is the HTML proof.
Upside: Get your new words here! A "wrench" means a "slutty bimbo" and a "genka" is a "morony jerk".
Downside: It could do with a few more wrenches and genkas to liven up the place.
Typical quote: "Gillette is used by both guys and girls. It is 'hip' to have disposable heads on razors." Erm...
Overall: ★

SHINY SLAPPY PEOPLE

Name: HairFree Home Page
What is it? Duncan Goodhew IS a fashion icon!
Where you'll find it: http://206.162.89.3/jkw/
What's it like? For some, happiness is but a pint and a pie away. But for Jason K Walz, true nirvana can only come from whipping out the Gillette Sensor and indulging in some good old follicle self-mutilation. Why the obsession? Rest assured it's nothing politically dubious or *too* sexy. Come watch as Jase explains how to get a smoother finish, posts scary photos of him and his nutso pals (click on spooky Dave for a real treat) and invites you over to his chat lounge to discuss moisturiser. Weirder things *are* lurking on the Web, but as a prime example of 20th century fetishism (or just an intense phobia of Jennifer Aniston), this is strange, strange, *strange*.
Upside: The Balderized section where celebrities are virtually shaven by having crap bald bits stuck on their photos.
Downside: Go on, wash the strength back out.
Typical quote: "First I'll go into the various methods concerning electric shears. I'll then explore the little used method of the electric razor. Next I delve into the complex and very popular method of the regular store-bought razor."
Overall: ★★★

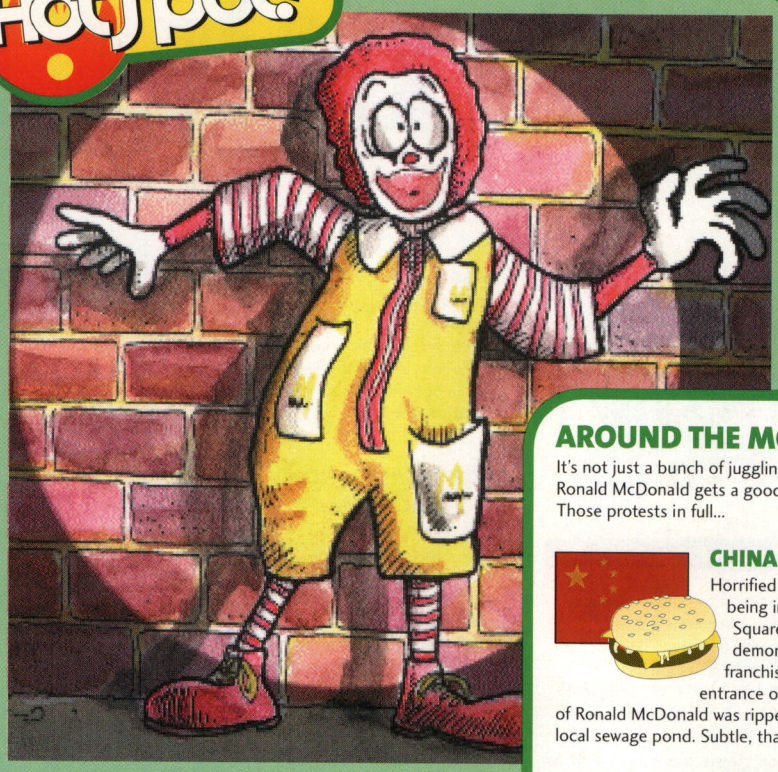
WAILING FIREWALL

Name: Virtual Jerusalem
What is it? "The Jewish world from the heart of Israel," it seems.
Where you'll find it: http://www.virtual.co.il
What's it like? Consistently crammed with all things Israel-related, Virtual Jerusalem gets its once-yearly cybermakeover with the on-line celebration of the 3,309th Passover – or "greatest 'coming out' party in history" as they so quaintly put it. Swot up on the Haggadah and Exodus Story, send a virtual passover postcard to an e-mate, or chinwag on-line with Aaron. You know. Aaron. Moses' brother. Yeah, he does Web chats these days...



So if bald is beautiful, how the hell do you explain laughing boy here?

HotSpot!



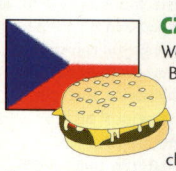
Name: McSpotlight
What is it? Ronald gets an on-line shafting.
Where you'll find it: http://www. mcspotlight.org
What's it like? 25 months of testimony and 19,000 pages of court transcripts later, McSpotlight has finally reached the end of its the infamous McLibel Trial. To celebrate, the site authors have launched a brand new search engine for their multi-mirrored, 4,000-file-strong Web site. So far accessed over seven million times, you can read all those transcripts on-line. It was possibly coded up to keep McSpotlight's collective mind off that forthcoming legal decision. With no jury allowed, will Mr Justice Bell rule against anti-McDonald's leafleters Helen Steel and Dave Morris, or will he find them guilty of burger-baiting libel? Come, plough through McDonalds's infamous 500-page closing argument and wait for Judgement Day.
Upside: And those scores just in... Common Bloke United: one. Multinational AFC: nil.
Downside: Come on, admit it. When was the last time you scoffed a McSpace Jam burger?
Typical quote: "The Internet cannot be controlled. It's difficult to do anything about it..." And thank you, McDonalds "spokesperson".

AROUND THE MCWORLD

It's not just a bunch of juggling lefties in North London, you know. Ronald McDonald gets a good McKicking wherever he travels. Those protests in full...

CHINA

Horrified at the world's largest McDonald's being insensitively located in Tiananmen Square, Earth Islanders decided to demonstrate against the latest Mcdonald's franchise. Joined by women objecting to the entrance of fast-food chains into India, a statue of Ronald McDonald was ripped from a bench and dumped in the local sewage pond. Subtle, that.

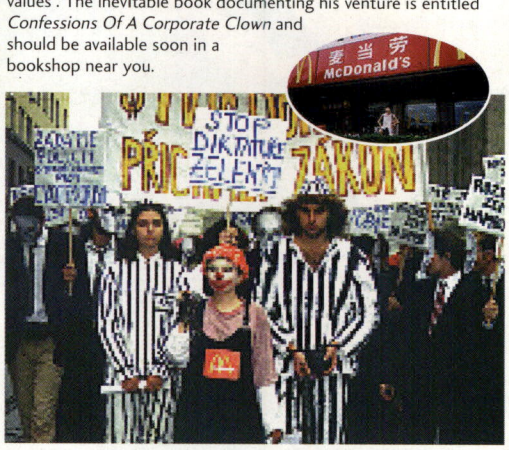


CZECH REPUBLIC

Worldwide Anti-McDonald's Day protests in Brno saw around 100 people gather together. An allegedly "fake" Ronald executed effigies of the "McLibel Two" while protesters donned death masks and chanted: "We want to consume more! Destroy the tropical rainforests! Throw ecologists in jail! Let's grind nature into hamburgers! Garbage is great!" Ironically, one can only assume.

CANADA

"I want to apologise for participating in helping to brainwash North America's young people into doing something that I now know to be contrary to the purpose of life." Geoffrey Giuliano played Ronald McDonald for two years, but since his conversion to Hinduism, he's quit the job and now aims to create "a new, not-for-profit character promoting non-violent vegetarian values". The inevitable book documenting his venture is entitled *Confessions Of A Corporate Clown* and should be available soon in a bookshop near you.



Upside: Interactivity ahoy! Positively teeming with multimedia goodness.
Downside: Of limited interest to the Cliff Richard Fan Club.
Typical quote: "The Israeli version of *Baywatch, Kachol Amok* (or *Deep Blue*) met with critical acclaim. The producers will return to the pristine beaches of Tel Aviv [and] will be looking for better acting and better scripts. Hmm, that never stopped the gang at *Baywatch!*"
Overall: ★★★★

NEWS OF THE UNDERWORLD

Name: The Big Issue
What is it? The guilty conscience for office workers everywhere.
Where you'll find it: http://www.virgin.net/independent97/big_ish/index.html
What's it like? There are 125,000 homeless households in the UK. British councils and the government own 123,000 empty properties. Anyone see a link here? *The Big Issue* does, and with the oft-promised full site yet to materialise, this info bomb must suffice for the time being. Covering the homeless, public transport, voting rights, drugs and the evil media, worthiness gushes from its niftily-designed pages. Come hither for a generous helping of cyber-righteousness.
Upside: Head to the chat rooms to argue your point.
Downside: There are more important things than campaigning for the right to have a spliff.
Typical quote: "Thousands of people in the UK die every year from smoking-related diseases. Alcohol abuse is estimated to cost over £2 billion a year. Yet press hysteria greets every ecstasy-related death. Isn't it time for a reasoned debate?"
Overall: ★★★

FEAR OF A BLACK PLANET

Name: NetNoir
What is it? "The soul of cyberspace" for the Afrocentric Nethead.
Where you'll find it: http://www.netnoir.com/index.html
What's it like? Although heavy on the old preaching, a more in-depth and savvy Web site you won't stumble upon. For the black community by the black community, NetNoir flits edutainment-style from Lifestyle (sports and music) to Empowerment (education meets big business) in its bid to educate the on-line readership. Everything from hip-hoppers *Wu-Tang Clan* and baseball legend Jackie Robinson to African folk legends get a multimedia look-in, making it of interest to everyone, no matter what your skin colour.
Upside: "By all means necessary" just got a new outlet.
Downside: That Give to The Salvation Army area. So all right-thinking black people are Christians, are they?
Typical quote: "Every time a cheap form of communication has entered our society, we as a civilisation have undergone amazing change."
Overall: ★★★★

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Name: The Samaritans
What is it? A brand new Web site for the 43-year-old charity.
Where you'll find it: http://www.samaritans.org
What's it like? With Samaritans Week '97 only just finished, the volunteer service's latest attempt to reach the nation's youth goes on-line. And with a 143 per cent increase in attempted suicides by young men in the last ten years, it's a worthy home page indeed. Come here for the latest info, listings of their 204 branches and a detailed history of the organisation's founding. A hit here could be the best thing you've done all week.
Upside: Recently given the cyberoverhaul to look and read even better.
Downside: 63 per cent of e-mailers acknowledge suicidal feelings as opposed to 25 per cent of phone callers.
Typical quote: "It doesn't matter whether [young people] pick up the phone or a mouse, it's vital to communicate feelings before they get overwhelming." The Samaritans' National E-mail Co-ordinator, Paul Gauntlett.
Overall: ★★★

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

Name: The Daily Outrage
What is it? Technoid dumping ground for the human race's stupidity.
Where you'll find it: http://www.DailyOutrage.com
What's it like? CNN with a conscience, The Daily Outrage's editorial staff scour the Web's newswires for "the most outrageous examples of incompetence and injustice". Unfortunately, there's no shortage of material. Read about how Miami city chiefs spent $14 million dollars on a new library but neglected to allocate any money for books. Or how known murderers are released on spurious technicalities. And how petty criminals serve time on chain gangs while child rapists work near local children. Depressing? Yes, but don't stop reading.
Upside: Join the Outrage-A-Day mailing list.
Downside: "If you thought that OJ's criminal trial was a sick joke, you haven't seen anything yet."
Typical quote: "New York City has 58 elevator inspectors. How many of them have been taking bribes? A corruption probe has resulted in the suspension of 40 inspectors, but sources say that nearly everyone was involved."
Overall: ★★★★

Food & Drink

KING OF THE KEBAB: **PAUL PETTENGALE**
ppettengale@futurenet.co.uk

BAR TALK

Name: Acats Bar Pages
What is it? Educate yourself on the art of drinking alcohol.
Where you'll find it: http://www.epact.se/acats/
What's it like? A peculiar hotch potch. For instance, it's interesting to learn that a Fairy Godmother will give you an airy, floaty sort of buzz. And it's slightly quirky to find a large section dedicated to pick-up lines that bartenders have witnessed while shaking their mixers. Then there's the gallery of cocktail shakers, which includes detailed instructions on how to use them properly. What's the point of that? Surely you just stick the booze in 'em and shake the things?
Upside: More than 130 cocktails recipes for you to make yourself sick on.
Downside: Leans heavily towards cocktails and away from things drinkable.
Typical quote: "I like your shirt, but it would look better on my floor in the morning!"
Overall: ★★★★

GLUTTON'S A TO Z

Name: Searchable On-line Archive Of Recipes
What is it? Would it be insulting to suggest that it's an archive of recipes that are a) searchable and b) on-line?
Where you'll find it: http://soar.berkeley.edu/recipes/
What's it like? Don't be put off by the eye-glazingly boring pages of text. This site houses 36,150 recipes – that's almost ten years' worth of nosh to chomp through. It's also thoughtfully indexed by subject and comes with a search facility. Tap in your key words, such as "avocado" and "baked", hit the submit button and there you go – a recipe for baked avocado.
Upside: With that many recipes, you're bound to find something new and inspiring.
Downside: No photos of the final result to inform and inspire the wannabe cook.
Typical quote: "Chop scallions into fine pieces and sauté in olive oil until browned."
Overall: ★★★★

BON VIVEUR

Name: Yak Shaya's Wine Home Page
What is it? A collection of wine tasting notes, primarily – and rather good ones at that.
Where you'll find it: http://homepage.interaccess.com/~pduffy/yakshaya/
What's it like? Rarely are personal home pages much cop. Do you really want to see Shane and Darlene's wedding pictures? Or a photo of Irma's cat? Or read Jewel's abysmal poetry? Of course you don't. Contrary to Shane, Darlene, Irma and Jewel's delusions, you don't give a monkeys. Fortunately, this page is a bit different. Yak's not particularly proficient when it comes to coding up his Web site, but what he lacks in Internet prowess, he more than makes up for with his love of plonk. Read Yak's tasting notes on 230 wines from around the world and the accompanying accounts of his "wine and food adventures", which blah on about where he's been to get blathered on vino.
Upside: He obviously knows what he's talking about.
Downside: Look at the photos and be warned: you are what you eat. And he's lardy.
Typical quote: "An excellent wine, though more for a summer day outside with a bowl of grapes than for winter dinners."
Overall: ★★★

Well, it's an edible veranda, isn't it? I mean, *obviously...*

VISA REQUIRED

Name: The Passport Wine Club
What is it? Read about various recommended wines and then, if you like the sound of them, whip out your credit card and buy a few boxes.
Where you'll find it: http://www.topwine.com
What's it like? Admittedly, the Wine Club is a commercial concern. But the difference here is like the difference between buying a bottle of cheap claret from the corner shop and stepping into a fine wine merchants to discuss the purchase of a case of Montrachet. This is a site that offers good advice on what wines are worth buying, so you won't waste your money. And, of course, if you don't fancy on-line shopping, you can simply read the reviews here, absorb the worthy advice, then pop down to your local off licence to satisfy your palate. Which is exactly what they don't want you to do. Hah!
Upside: Plenty of good advice that's free for the taking.
Downside: You won't find any bargains here.
Typical quote: "We were very excited when we tasted these two delicious red Burgundies a year ago, and the producers offered us excellent prices if we would order a lot – so we did. So reap the rewards of our negotiations and enjoy these great Pinot Noirs for a song."
Overall: ★★★

BRITISH GASTRONOMY

Name: Catering UK
What is it? A UK resource for cooks, caterers and anyone interested in food and booze.
Where you'll find it: http://www.catering-uk.co.uk
What's it like? As with most of the Internet, sites devoted to food and drink are generally dominated by Americans. Not this one. Interesting to anyone keen on cooking, and a must to bookmark if food is your living, Catering UK offers news, features and recipes. Find out about etiquette, hygiene and healthy eating, or peruse the job ads and make contacts in the industry.
Upside: User-friendly and dedicated to the UK with plenty of content. Hurrah.
Downside: It's aimed more at the catering industry than people who just like cooking.
Typical quote: "The last time we had leftover cooked stew or other food with meat, chicken or fish, the food was: a) cooled to room temperature, then put in the refrigerator; b) put in the refrigerator immediately after the food was served; c) left at room temperature overnight or longer." Are you likely to give yourself salmonella? Find out with the Catering UK quiz on hygiene.
Overall: ★★★★

LENTIL-TASTIC

Name: Virtual Vegetarian
What is it? Where all the skinny, malnourished types check out recipes for lentils.
Where you'll find it: http://www.vegetariantimes.com
What's it like? Brought to you by the creators of the magazine *Vegetarian Times*, this is a professional-looking, albeit small Web site. It's aimed squarely at those oddballs in society who can't stomach the idea of slitting an animal's throat in order to stuff their bellies. Needless to say there are recipes (though not enough), but the editorial also concerns itself with nutritional information and, in typical hippy style, natural remedies for common ailments.
Upside: It's healthy and good for you. Apparently.
Downside: There aren't enough recipes and it doesn't do anything for the stereotypical vegetarian image.
Typical quote: "Bacterial enzymes break down some of the soybeans' nutrients and thus make tempeh's protein more available."
Overall: ★★★

YOU DRINK, SHE DRINKS, HE DRINKS...

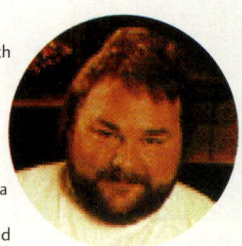
Name: iDRINK: The Drink Mixing Web Site
What is it? An impressively vast selection of ways to get severely intoxicated.

Yak's *Wine In Their Eyes*, featuring: Lou Reed (left), Fatima Whitbread (top right) and Glastonbury's Micheal Eavis (right).

HotSpot!

Name: Gourmet World
What is it? A colourful smorgasbord of news, recipes, shops, trivia and people of a distinctly culinary nature.
Where you'll find it: http://www. gourmetworld.com/
What's it like? Navigable via colourful image maps, Gourmet World covers everything from recipes to restaurant guides to jobs. Unfortunately, most of it's entirely US-centric, but the Culinary Centre is a must-see, whatever part of the world you hail from. Find out about on-line culinary contests, access thousands of recipes, and gen up on cooking tips and techniques. You can also read about how some of the world's most famous chefs got into serving up top nosh.
Upside: Huge, lively and detailed, with great illustrations.
Downside: Those graphics are going to load horribly slowly unless you're on a fat-line connection.
Typical quote: "How can you tell when pasta is done? It's a myth that you can test readiness by throwing a noodle against the wall. Taste is your best bet. If the recipe says to cook it for ten minutes, try it at eight. It should be cooked through, yet firm (al dente)."

CYBERCHEFS



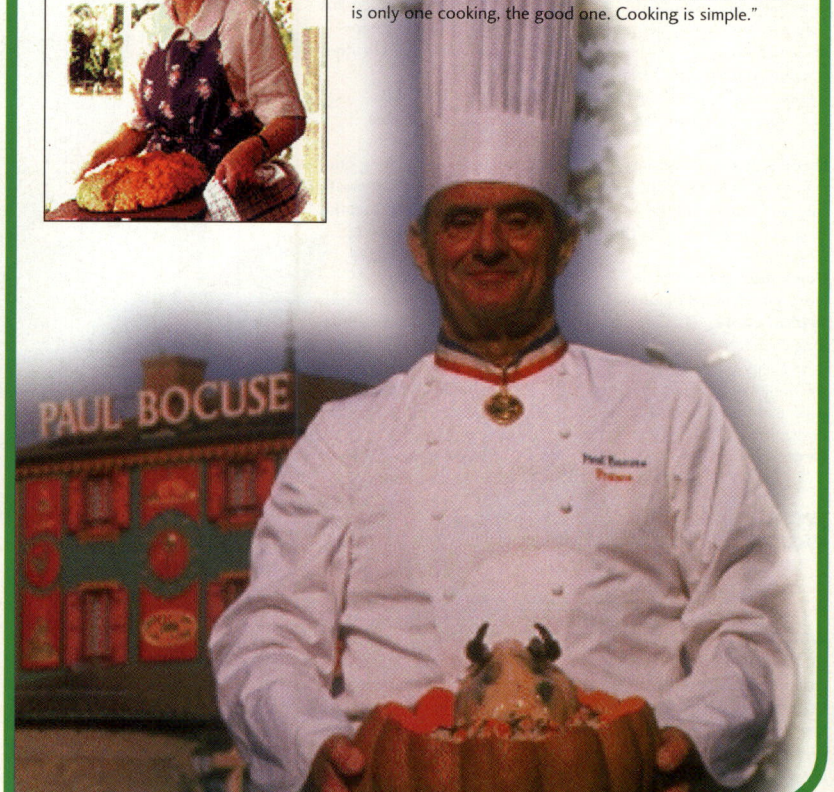
Many a chef, it seems, is happy to share their passion for cooking with the rest of the Web. You can find loads of tips and recipes on-line, many coming from famous chefs. Want to put names to the dishes? Head over to Gourmet World.

JOHN FOLSE is a chef and owner of two award-winning restaurants in South Louisiana. His advice? "Like all great artists, chefs must create a style that is recognisable. In order to stand out, you should stay true to your roots, stay true to your region and stay true to your heart and soul. But, most of all, remember simplicity!"

JAN BIRNBAUM is the chief chef and owner of Catahoula Restaurant and Saloon in Calistoga, California. Any wise words, Jan? "I've always had a business mind and always paid attention to how things work. Restaurants are great, the art form is fabulous and it's very important, but it only works if the business works."

DARINA ALLEN owns and runs the Ballymaloe Cooking School at Shanagarry, in County Cork, Ireland. "I like teaching complete beginners. My whole mission is to help people feel that cooking is not a mystery and to give them confidence."

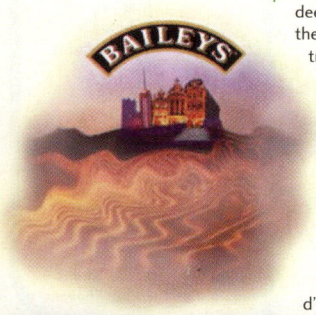
PAUL BOCUSE'S restaurant in France is the proud possessor of three Michelin stars. "Memory and hunger are the main ingredients of cooking. I still think to the roast calf that my grandmother used to make. I still see her digging a small well in the mashed potatoes to pour the sauce whose inimitable taste still makes me salivate... There is only one cooking, the good one. Cooking is simple."



Where you'll find it: http://www.idrink.com/
What's it like? The people who put together the iDRINK pages seem to take their pastime very seriously. It's a dark and foreboding place, like some backstreet bar where everyone's wearing suits and drinking steadily without conversation. The subject of their dedication is cocktails. You'll find more than 3,000 of the things here and all of them (bar a few, non-alchy ones) should get you sozzled in no time at all.
Upside: Bet you didn't know there were as many as 3,000 cocktails in the world.
Downside: Some of them don't contain alcohol.
Typical quote: "Comfortable Screw. Ingredients: 6oz orange juice, 0.75oz Southern Comfort, 1oz vodka. Directions: serve in highball glass."
Overall: ★★★

WOULD YOU LIKE THAT WITH ICE?

Name: Baileys Pleasuredome
What is it? That sickly sweet drink that girls seem to like and your granny always buys at Christmas.



Baileys: "nice with Orange Fanta."

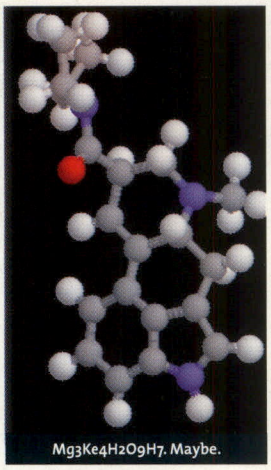
Where you'll find it: http://www.baileys.com/
What's it like? For some reason, Baileys is quite trendy these days. Perhaps, then, it's time to check out what you've been missing. Decked out in the predictable Celtic-style font, the site's actually rather jolly. You can read up on Baileys-based desserts and cocktails or learn a little about the drink's origins, but the main emphasis is on meeting other people visiting the site. Particularly bizarre is the Mood Maze, where you answer multiple choice questions revolving around Baileys to find out what kind of mood you're in – playful, sensuous and so on. You're then supposed to talk to other visitors to the site who are in the same "mood".
Upside: As fun as the Irish.
Downside: The drink's a bit on the sickly side, to be honest.
Typical quote: "In the PleasureDome, you can be whoever you want to and meet some very interesting characters from all over the world. And they want to meet you too. Find out if you're the one they're looking for."
Overall: ★★★★

PIZZA PERFECTIONIST

Name: Pizza 101
What is it? Posh recipes for the pizza aficionado.
Where you'll find it: http://www.radix.net/~joshua/pizza.htm
What's it like? There are some deeply obsessive people out there. Like this chap, who's traced the history of pizza right back to before Christ. Fortunately for us, he'd like to share some of his pizza recipes. His concern is that pizza just isn't seen as a "proper" dish any more. And anyone who's eaten in US-style fast food joints can surely see his point. So, d'you want proper pizza? Check out recipe 101.
Upside: The pizza truth is in here, though you'd have to be pretty dull to go into quite this much detail.
Downside: It's an amateur site, and looks it.
Typical quote: "Rumours circulate that pizza was invented in New York, but take no heed."
Overall: ★★★

Drugs

DOPE RHYMES: **MIKE GOLDSMITH**
mgoldsmith@futurenet.co.uk


Mg3Ke4H2O9H7. Maybe.

HERBAL REMEDY

Name: The Ibogaine Dossier
What is it? A dollop of hydrogen, a smidgeon of nitrogen, the odd chemical bond et voilà! You've got an anti-addictive alkaloid!
Where you'll find it: http://www.ibogaine.org
What's it like? Ibogaine is a plant discovered in the West African rain forest that can help people trying to kick heroin or cocaine. Text-heavy but just about accessible, The Ibogaine Dossier details this still-experimental substance (the only authorised treatments are in Central America) with scientific reports, first-hand feedback and a refreshing lack of moralising. Go read the future. Hopefully.
Upside: Join the Ibogaine mailing list – e-mail listproc@calyx.net with "subscribe ibogaine [your name]" in the message body.
Downside: It's hardly the most, um, intoxicating of sites.
Typical quote: "One of Ibogaine's interesting attributes is its ability to reveal and affect the underlying trauma that may have lead to self medicating and drug misuse."
Overall: ★★★★

WORLD WIDE WORRY

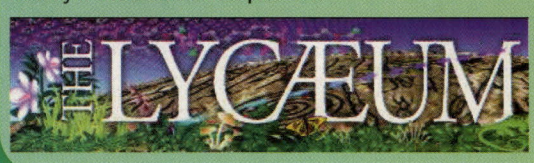
Name: Web Of Addictions
What is it? An A to Z of addictions and potential cures.
Where you'll find it: http://www.well.com/user/woa/index.html
What's it like? Created to combat the "appaling extent of misinformation about abused drugs on the Internet", Web Of Addictions is an all-encompassing database of dependencies and the on-line information available. From passive smoking and amphetamine abuse to steroids and even caffeine, the towering amount of info makes for an illuminating if dull read. Shame there's no decent search engine to make sense of it all. Why, it's enough to make your head spin.
Upside: Perfect for anyone involved in drug education.
Downside: Possibly not so perfect for anyone actually ON drugs and looking for more personal advice. Try The Samaritans instead (http://www.samaritans.org.uk/)
Typical quote: "While amphetamine users may feel a temporary boost in self-confidence and power, the abuse of the drug can lead to delusions, hallucinations and a feeling of paranoia." AAAAAARGH!!! etc.
Overall: ★★★★

TOGA! TOGA! TOGA! TOGA...

Name: Belushi.com
What is it? An on-line fraternity house for the big, bloated Blues Brother in the sky.
Where you'll find it: http://www.belushi.com
What's it like? Belushi's narcotic antics have long since entered Hollywood folklore, but you wouldn't know it from this site. Although his career's covered in depth, if you're snooping for gossip on those infamous cocaine races with A Famous Celebrity or insights on the kind of man who could withstand such excesses, then look elsewhere. The cemetery's probably a good starting point.
Upside: He might have pegged it, but his influence lives on.
Downside: A MIDI applet that seizes up your computer before torturing you with a muzak rendition of 'Born To Be Wild'.
Typical quote: "The mixing of heroin and cocaine that night had a cumulative effect on the brain, slowing down John's breathing and finally causing complete respiratory failure."
Overall: ★★

HotSpot!

Name: The Lycaeum
What is it? Just about everything ever written, drawn or sniggered at about narcotics.
Where you'll find it: http://www.lycaeum.org/
What's it like? 8,255 HTML pages, 21,128 public files, over 1,000 drug links, 23 free on-line psychedelic books... The list goes on and on in this, the world's largest on-line library dedicated to "visionary plants and chemicals". The Lycaeum's vaguely New Age sympathies are easy enough to guess, but rather than pushing forward their opinions, there's enough info here to let you make up your own mind. Though after a couple of weeks ploughing through the Magic Mushroom Growers Guide 3.2, trip reports and "psychedelic graphics", you probably won't have one left anyway.
Upside: Join up as a member to access the forums, chat rooms and get your "free Lycaeum T-shirt, mousepad or coffee mug!".
Downside: All that effort for a soggy spliff and a handful of dodgy toadstools?
Typical quote: "Information, thank God, is still legal, and the Lycaeum can exist in relative safety as long as no actual illegal activity is discussed on these premises."



THE INSIDE DOPE

Name: The Wonderful World Of Weed
What is it? Of buds and bongs and blim burns.
Where you'll find it: http://www.globalxs.nl/home/l/lhjr/
What's it like? Still the preferred tipple of students and social workers alike, Lennart Hengstmengel's THC temple is a one-stop PR blitz for the almighty 'erb. Join with Uncle Lennart as he shows you how to construct a joint, get hammered on hot knives and, whether it's his Recipe section or Etiquette page, generally get ripped to buggery. There's nothing revelatory here and the arguments for legalisation couldn't be flimsier if they were made out of Rizla, but as an innocuous tribute to the mirthsome capabilities of the humble spliff, it's just dandy.
Upside: So damned tempting, it could be sponsored by McVitie's Hob Nobs. If you get my drift...
Downside: Other people can't make it off the couch; this bloke has coded up a Web page. Now he wouldn't be telling porkies, would he?
Typical quote: "Coughing up smoke will make you cough some more! You might cough for five minutes straight if your throat is really sensitive; don't worry, you're not going to die."
Overall: ★★★★

FANCY A BREW?

With the aid of Lycaeum's Neuronectar Smart Drink Designer, you can enjoy a cocktail AND nurture your inner child. Select from the on-screen karmic ingredients, hit the button and wait for your Zen Martini to down-load! Ommmmm...

Name: Slow Comfortable Blowback Against The Wall
Spiritual ingredients: Geometry, Spirit and Eros.
DSDI (Dodgy Smart Drug Ingredients): Quarter tsp of L-Tyrosine, 800mg of Piracetam, quarter tsp of Fo-Ti, 3g of Ipomoea violacea, one tsp of Ginseng and 100mg of DMAE.
What it'll do: Make you juggle, make you spiritually enriched, make you sick.

Name: The "But I Went To The Garage Last Night" Wallbanger
Spiritual ingredients: Light, Heat, Activity and Vigilance.
DSDI: 150mg of Guarana and 100mg of Ephedra.
What it'll do: Turn your wee the colour of mushroom soup.

Name: The "Come On, You've Had It For Ages" Collada
Spiritual ingredients: Dream, Dance, Focus and Empathy.
DSDI: 800mg of Piracetam, 150mg of Guarana, quarter teaspoon of Fo-Ti and 100mg of DMAE.
What it'll do: Get you a roadie job for *Kula Shaker*.

TIRED OF TYPING IN THEM URLS? THE TOP 100 IS ALSO BOOKMARKED ON THE CONNECT CD!

NET DOG'S ESSENTIAL SELECTION

Inside!

The Top 100 Web sites that should be barking at your bookmarks!

YOUR AT A GLANCE KEY TO THE MANY-MUZZLED NET DOG

Weird

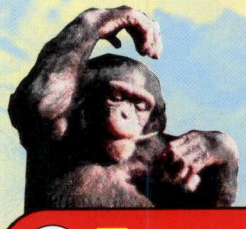
Sport

Sex

Cyber

Culture

Resources



68 STAR SITE!

Take a tour through the thrill-packed caverns of Addicted To Noise's unbeatable e-zine.

80 FETCH!

Six search engines. Six stupid words. Mighty weird results.

Net Dog's Star Site

Addicted To Noise

http://www.addict.com/

Music is surely tailor-made for the subjective climes of the Internet. "My bandwidth's better than your bandwidth!" Scream a zillion and one sites dedicated to canonising The Goombay Dance Band.

Among all this anarchy, it's obvious that what's needed is the Net equivalent of a PROPER Earth music paper. And that's exactly what Addicted To Noise is – and more. Launched back in '94 by former Rolling Stone *writer Michael Goldberg, this monthly e-zine receives* ➤

Music News Of The World

If you can't wait for next week's *NME*, Music News Of The World is an ever-fresh mish-mash of studio rumours, insider gossip and eye-bulging exclusives that's just as likely to have a scoop on Sheryl Crow as it is the *Beastie Boys*. ATN's archives stretch back to '94, but best of all is You Say It's Your Birthday. Dishing dirt on everyone from Bobby Brown to that bloke out of *The Blow Monkeys*, the only question is, how the HELL do they know these things?

Features

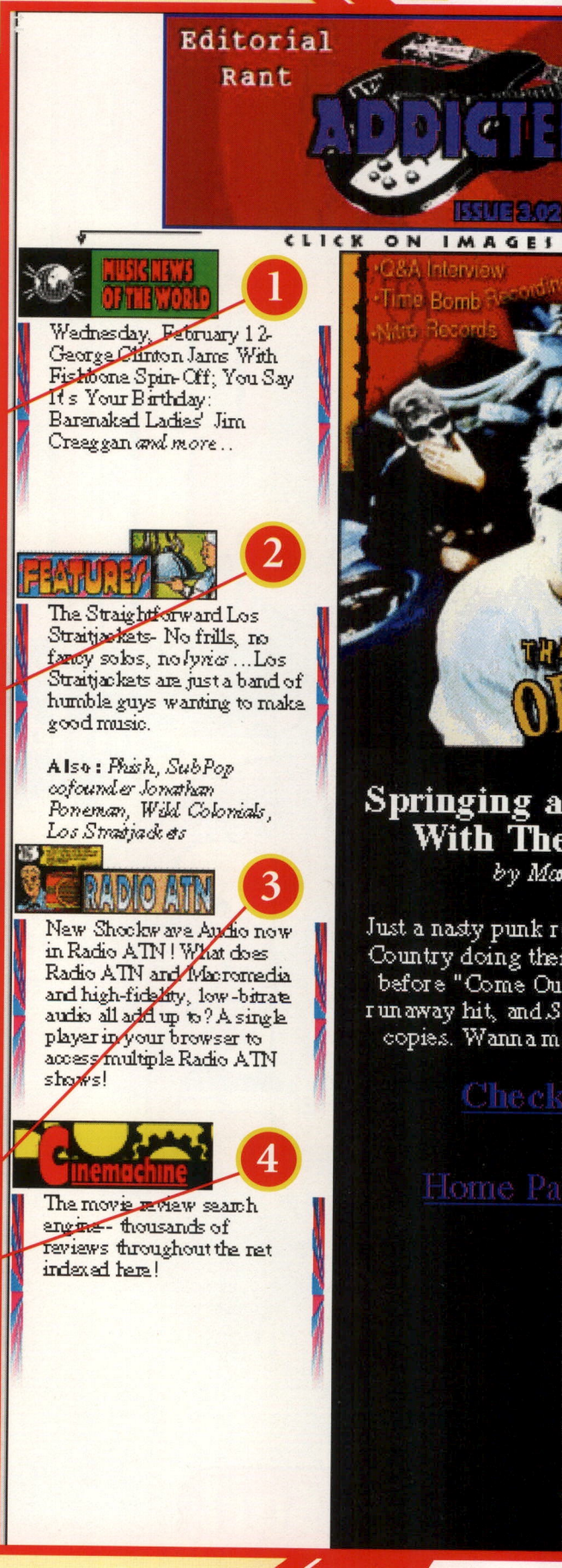
Your average feature in a music mag? A few thousand words and a sprinkling of pictures guaranteed to leave ink stains all over your fingers. A feature in Addicted To Noise? Sharp photography of everyone from *Eels* to *REM* and interviews backed up by sound snippets and video footage. Multimedia in Unbearably Cool Shocker? Stranger things have happened.

Radio ATN

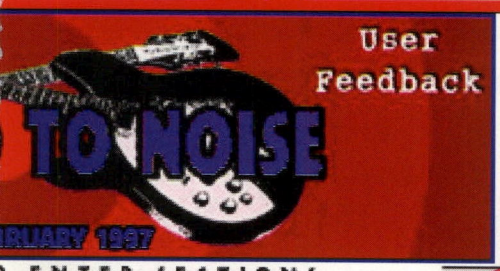
Link up to Radio ATN and discover just how good RealAudio can be. ATN's multiple shows cover all possible musical tastes. Use that Shockwave radio tuner to hook into exclusive live tracks, the latest interviews with the likes of Neil Young and Billy *"Smashing Pumpkin"* Corgan, and a positively mind-boggling collaboration between *Pearl Jam* and Joey Ramone. Hey ho and, in a very real sense, let's go...

Cinemachine

Your weekend trip to Blockbusters just became a whole lot more bearable. Cinemachine is ATN's very own movie review search engine and sits somewhere between Lycos and *Film '97*. Type in a movie title and Cinemachine scours the Internet for ratings and slatings of whatever film you desire. Even *Police Academy Four*. Although it's hardly as extensive as the all-seeing, all-knowing Internet Movie Database and can never match up to the sheer brilliance of Mr Showbiz, Cinemachine possesses a certain critical kudos.



Net Dog's Star Site



ENTER SECTIONS

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in Lo-Fi

5 REVIEWS

Movies! Film Columnist Jennie Yabroff pits *The Crucible* against *Scream*.

Also: *Album, Book, Live Show, & Film Reviews*

6 COLUMNS

Permanent Wave by Lori Miller- Lori and her Parents rock out!

-Other Columns-
David Was
Dave Marsh
England's Dreaming
Greil Marcus

7 SONIC LODGE

Pre-release entire albums! Words can't describe this month's featured artist, Space Needle.

8 HYPE

Is your fear of leaving your house outweighed only by your terror of being without new music? Well, today's your lucky day! Click on the handy tower next to each and every sound sample and find yourself in a dreamland of online music purchasing!

Also: *User Feedback, Staff, Rockin' Wardrobe, Order CDs, Contact ATN, & Support Sponsors*

Reviews

"If Bob Dole is going to watch another movie this year, this might be the one his handlers would recommend..." Savour sassy observations such as this in ATN's Reviews section. Divided into Albums, Live, Movies and Books, you can get the full lowdown on everything and anything. You can even try before you buy with Maczilla audio samples backing up the music reviews. The first muso e-zine to link sound clips with criticism, and still the best by far.

Columns

What good is editorial excellence if you can't indulge in the odd rant? From the Transatlantic hegemony of *The Spice Girls* to Tricky's pre-millennium psychosis, the modern pop palette is fed through a critical blender and re-emerges as 11 diverse and diverting columns. Look out for Michael Goldberg's regular editorial slot, as well as the ace 'Days Between Stations', scrawled by *England's Dreaming* author Greil Marcus.

Sonic Lodge

"A cult? A religion? Or just a damn cool place to hang your hat?" Subscribe to Sonic Lodge by e-mail, install your freebie ATN screensaver and settle back for monthly RealAudio previews of whole albums. Not only is it infinitely preferable to skulking round one of those listening posts in HMV, but you get to hear tracks ages before those poor losers without Net access.

Hype

Disagree with that rampant savaging of *Bush*'s latest grunge masterpiece? Head over to Hype for a bit of healthy retribution. Check out the critic's details on the Staff page, leave some constructive criticism at User Feedback and stoically refuse to buy any of the swanky new range of ATN T-shirts at the Rock 'n' Wardrobe.

➤ *230,000 hits every month. As well as treating you to groovesome scribblings, ATN uses the Net to its fullest capabilities. ShockWave provides a radio station, while RealAudio gives you sneak previews of whole albums rather than paltry 30-second snippets.*

But, even more important, the daily-updated news pages are just as entertaining as and possibly more authoritative than anything you'll find on the newsstand. You might find it a tad Yank oriented, but as exclusive REM *interviews slouch comfortably next to shock revelations such as Howard Jones's date of birth, the truth swiftly sets in: Addicted To Noise is the best music site in the world... Ever!*

Net Dog's Essential Selection

CYBERDOG: Of e-zines, cyberworlds, Net chats, and shareware – those Web-only treats for when there's nowt on the telly.

ADDICTED TO NOISE

http://www.addict.com/ATN

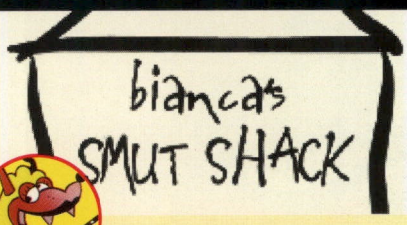
Net, plugs and rock 'n' roll: the finest Yanky music journos thrash it out on-line in an unbeatable e-zine. For a full tour of the site see page 68.

ALT X

http://www.altx.com/

Of buzz words and Burroughs. The hip lit e-zine firing from the front line of popular and Netty culture, with a fine line in celebrity "interspews".

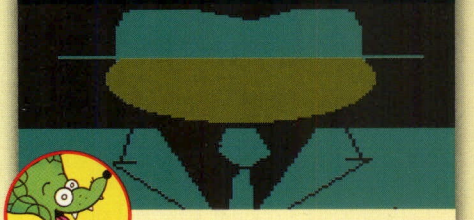
BIANCA'S SMUT SHACK



http://bianca.com/shack/

A super-sexy fantasy URL-land for bawdy boyz and grrls. The graphic chatter more than makes up for the moronic, crayonic visuals.

ALIENS, ALIENS, ALIENS



http://www.xensei.com/users/john9904/

The Men In Black, greys seeing red and an extraterrestrial agony aunt all make for a tongue-in-cheek lick at The Truth.

BBC TV

http://www.bbc.co.uk/

The Worldwide Web service from Aunty on-line – the Beeb's home page for classic rockumentary *Dancing In The Street* is a must-click.

BOOKWIRE

http://www.bookwire.com/

The ultimate books site, complete with okay e-zine, pithy reviews and an enormous shop that'll put your local lending library to shame.

CAN IT: MOVIE CLICHÉS LIST

http://www.like.it/vertigo/cliches.html

Saxophones are always sexy. Dogs always know who the bad guys are. And movie characters never, ever, ever make typnig mistokes.

ALPHAWORLD

http://www.worlds.net/

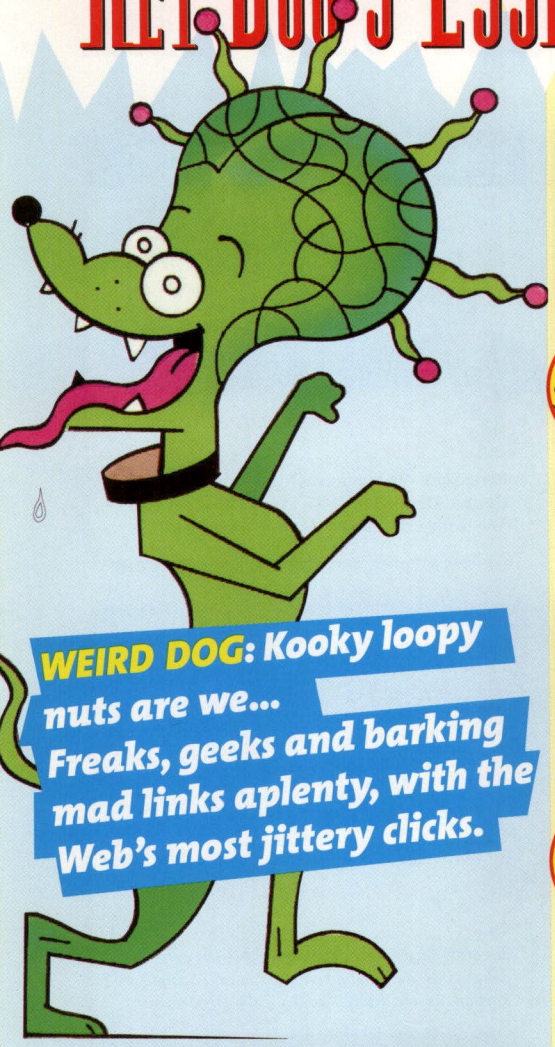
Pick your e-ego and send it on an oddball walkabout through this *Toy Story* on downers virtual world.

CARTOON WORLD

http://www.cet.com/~rascal/

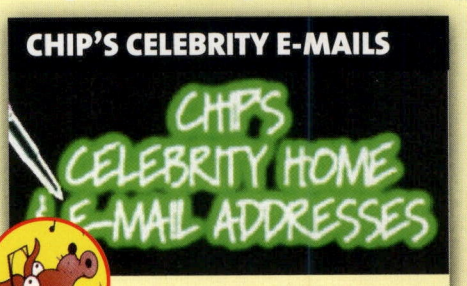
An understandably graphic-heavy, clip-packed shrine to Disney, Daffy and Deputy Dawg. The virtual colouring book is well worth a scribble.

Net Dog's Essential Selection



WEIRD DOG: Kooky loopy nuts are we... Freaks, geeks and barking mad links aplenty, with the Web's most jittery clicks.

CHIP'S CELEBRITY E-MAILS



http://oscar.teclink.net/~chip1120/

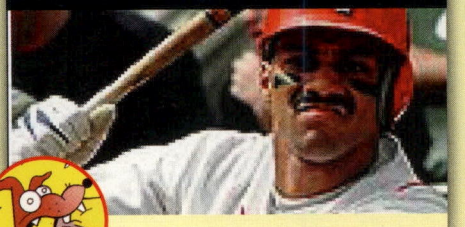
rpupkin@jittery.com... Free access to the Earth and e-mail addresses of your favourite Famous Being, aka The Stalker's Handbook.

CYBERVILLE RADIO

http://www.cyberville.co.uk

Using a nifty sound encoding system, Cyberville enables you to listen in while you walk the Web. Warning: local radio DJs in nauseating "full effect".

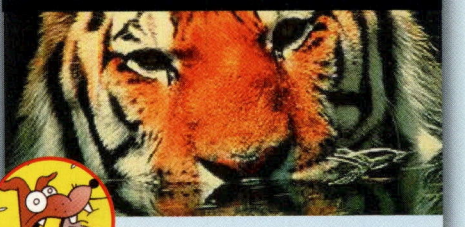
CNN INTERACTIVE



http://www.cnn.com

Packed with info and crammed with plug-ins, America's news server is tops for global affairs, sports and the odd shred of showbiz sleaze.

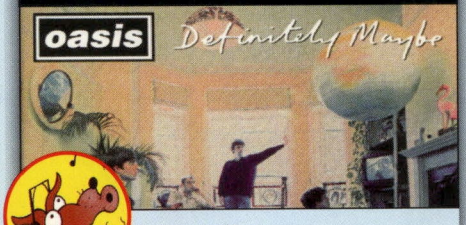
DISCOVERY CHANNEL



http://www.discovery.com

Hammerhead feeding frenzies, lava-spunking geysers, hormone-crazed reptilian shag fests... A stylish and entertaining learning zone.

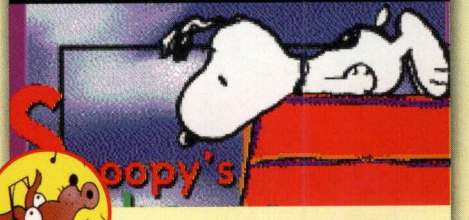
CDNOW!



http://cdnow.com

Now that's what we call the best music shop in the world... EVER! Dillions of titles plus cheapo prices plus quick delivery equals credit card meltdown.

THE COMIC STRIP



http://www.unitedmedia.com/comics/

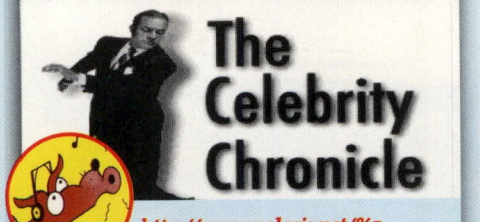
From (oh dear) *Peanuts* to (okay) *Dilbert*, you can get your fix of laffs on-line at this daily updated 'toon town.

DREW'S SCRIPTS-O-RAMA

http://home.cdsnet.net/~nikko11/scripts.htm

"But you don't *read* the movies..." An eclectic selection of transcribed scripts, from *2001* to Tarantino's original spec for *Natural Born Killers*.

CELEBRITY CHRONICLE



http://www.polaris.net/%7Emerlin/celeb_frames/fame.html

Big on anecdotes and hilariously bitchy, Joe Public relates his close encounters with the stars. Idol gossip and ego-bashing a speciality.

CONDÉ NAST TRAVELLER

http://travel.epicurious.com/travel/g_cnt/home.html

The publishing giants open up their window on the world. Sound advice for budget backpackers and dirty weekenders the globe over.

ECSTASY.ORG

http://www.obsolete.com/ecstasy/index.html

Thrills, pills 'n' bellyaches: Nicholas Saunders bypasses media hysteria for a balanced view of the highs and lows of toxic bliss.

Net Dog's Essential Selection

ELECTRONIC NEWSSTAND

http://www.enews.com/

Boasting over 2,000 mags on-line, you'd think this was the definitive click for the Menzies shelf-starer. Wrong! All American! Time for a UK version, then?

FA PREMIERSHIP

http://www.fa-carling.com/

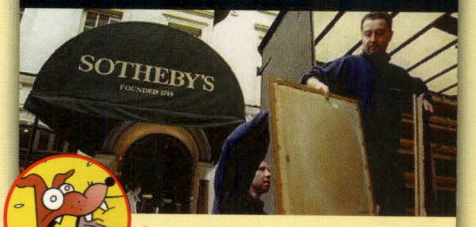
The Beautiful Game gets a makeover with this inexhaustible, stats-riddled official effort for the FA Premiership and its battered gladiators.

FORTEAN TIMES

http://www.forteantimes.com

Buried Yeti Ate My Shortbread! Dracula Monster Cooked Devil's Bun! Alien's Lung Drank My Dad! The world's best weird shit mag delivers on-line.

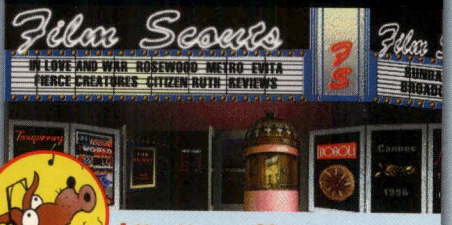
ELECTRONIC TELEGRAPH



http://www.telegraph.co.uk

Daily deadline headlines delivered from the e-paper boasting the broadest sheet. Plus some nice pictures of burly men emptying their lorries.

FILM SCOUTS



http://www.filmscouts.com

Using a maze of multiplexes as a novel navigating system, Film Scouts covers the movies with an indie edge that's lacking at Mr Showbiz.

FUTURENET

http://www.futurenet.com/

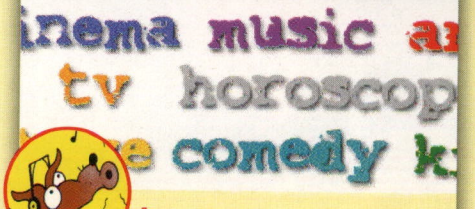
Recently face-lifted cyberhome to such papery delights as *.net*, *Total Film*, *T3*, *Total Football*, *PC Format*, us and (don't laugh) *Cake Decorator*.

ELECTRONIC ZOO

http://netvet.wustl.edu/e-zoo.htm

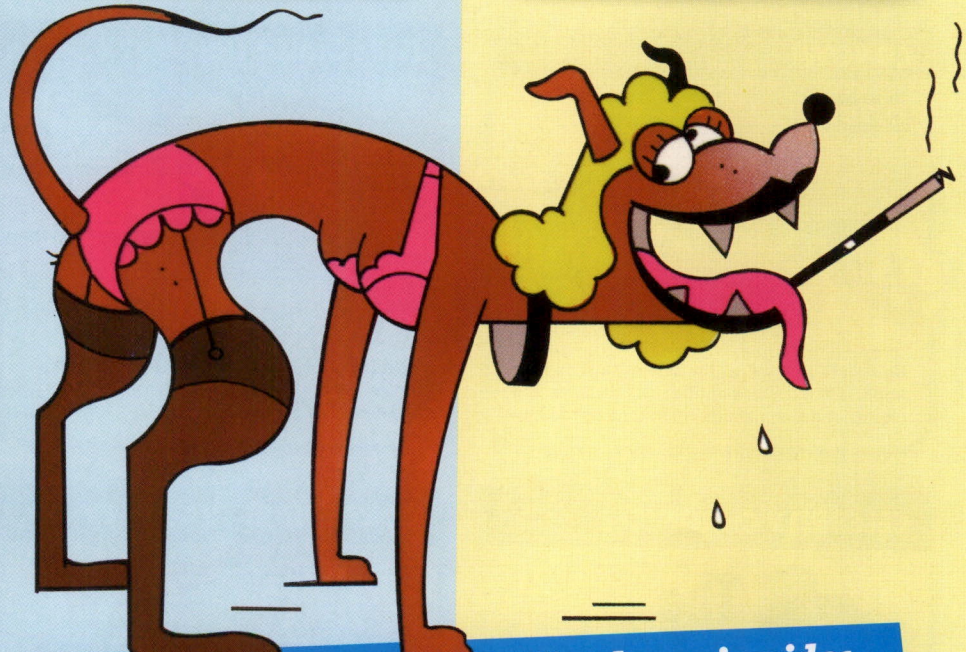
All aboard the cyberark! The ultimate list of Stuff What Is Alive On This Planet delivers a roaring menagerie of links. Laugh at the monkeys!

EVENTS ON-LINE



http://www.eventsonline.co.uk/

Local gigs, galleries and cinema listings – the UK's only National Entertainment Guide. Browser beware: painfully rubbish horoscope section.



SEXY DOG: The cream of on-line lovers' guides and Web erotica, brought to your bookmarks doggy style. Steam up your screen and stroke your mouse fondly to the very best of sweat Net.

Net Dog's Essential Selection

THE 40K MIRACLE MONTHLY

http://www.40kMiracle.com/

Recently cloaked in stupid Shockwave, this cartoon and games snack site provides some nonsense nourishment for the access-knackered Netter.

GONZO LINKS

http://www.capcon.net/users/lbenedet/

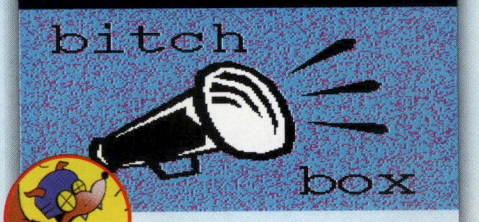
Kooks, spooks, nukes and mooks. Scramble your brains some more with these jittery links from the AARRGGHHH! side of panic culture.

HAPPY PUPPY

http://happypuppy.com/

Forget the shite graphics – this is still the number one games site on the Net. Empty the puppy's guts for shareware, demos and much, much more.

GABFEST



http://www.polaris.net/%7Emerlin/celeb_frames/fame.html

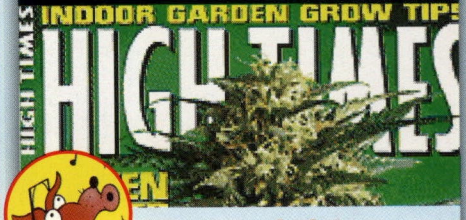
How do you feel about androgyny? Is brown the new black? How fat is plump? *Hmmm?* Take a walk on the bile side with this Web grrlie chat forum.

GORP

http://www.gorp.com/

"It's not all rambling, y'know..." Gawp at GORP and pick up some tips and tales from this essentials-packed e-zine-come-cyber-rucksack.

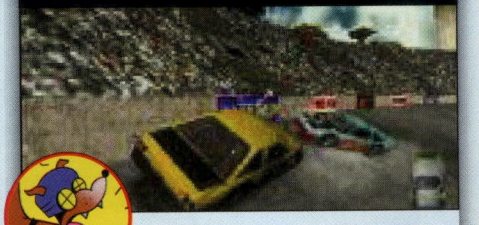
HIGH TIMES



http://www.hightimes.com/

A potted (cough) history of dope alongside fuzzy-brained features make this easily the best pro-smoke e-zine for the discerning spliff spod.

THE GAMES DOMAIN



http://www.gamesdomain.co.uk/

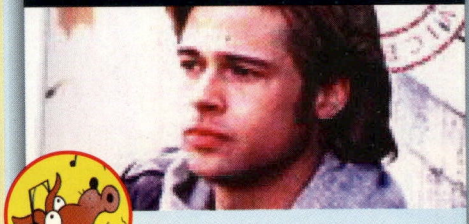
Down-loads a-go-go! Just jump straight in at the bleep end with one of the Web's premier amusement arcades.

GREENPEACE

http://www.greenpeace.org/uk

The whale-saving, oil rig-ramming, pollution-preventing technohippies hurl their worthy and wrathful campaigns on to the Net.

HOLLYWOOD ON-LINE



http://hollywood.com/

An up-to-the-minute, characterless, but blissfully empty-headed Tinseltown e-zine with a nice line in down-loadable movie clips.

THE GAME SPOT

http://www.gamespot.com

Sweat over a sports sim, get medieval with an RPG, and smash seven shades of sin out of a *Doom* demon in this game demo heaven.

THE GUARDIAN

http://www.guardian.co.uk

A regularly updated page that shuns current events in favour of features from *The Guardian Weekly* and *The Observer*'s A To Z Of Cults.

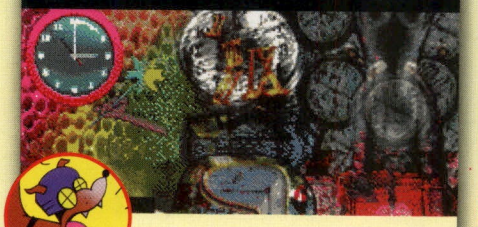
HOTWIRED!

http://www.hotwired.com/frontdoor/

It's hot! It's wired! It uses Teletext's colour scheme! The Web's best-on-anything e-zine is still shaking cocktails and clickably hip.

Net Dog's Essential Selection

HYPART



http://www.work.de/cgi-bin/HypArt.sh

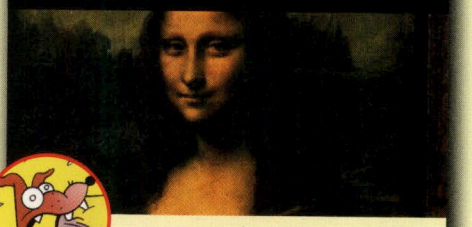
The Internet's oldest interactive art project is still going strong. Up to ten artists contribute to a themed montage with – hey! – delirious results.

JOHANN'S APHRODISIACS

http://www.santesson.com/aphrodis/aphrhome.htm

From the obvious (oysters) to the repellent (onions) to the downright indigestible (camel fat), Johann has the chemicals to set yer bits a-fizzing.

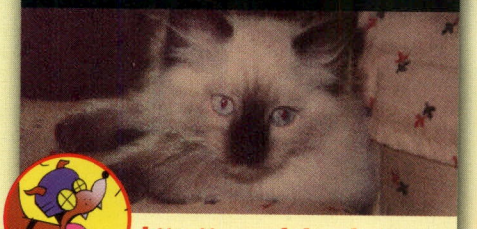
LE LOUVRE



http://mistral.culture.fr/louvre/

Although a screen is hardly a replacement for the eye-smacking opulence of the building itself, here's a neat e-tour of La Joconde et al.

HYPERIZONS



http://www.duke.edu/~mshumate/hyperfic.html

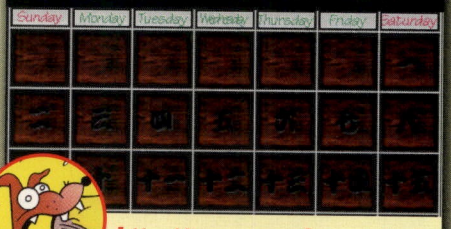
How I Learned To Love The Info Bomb And Other Stories... Michael Shumate's ever-readable e-anthology of high-quality hypertext fiction.

JUMBO!

http://www.jumbo.com

All aboard the Freebie Express for the direct line to Shareware Central. 93,000 links and rising to every plug-in, patch, game and gizmo ever.

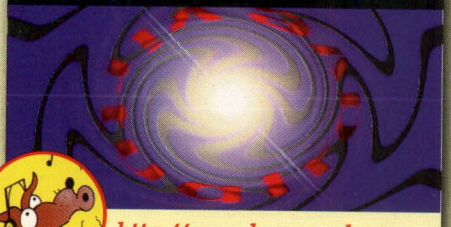
LITERARY HYPERCALENDAR



http://www.yasuda-u.ac.jp/LitCalendar.html

"On this day in history..." Pick the day of your choice and follow the links. Unstuffy, fun and it makes an ace birthday present for an e-mate.

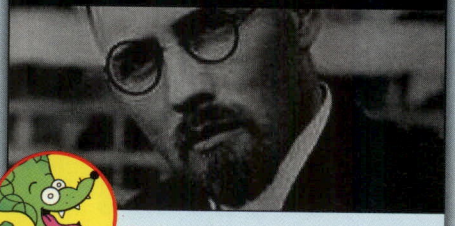
HYPERREAL



http://www.hyperreal.com

Drugs and frugs and bug powder dust at the Net's sweatiest rave pages. Techno, techno, and indeed, techno.

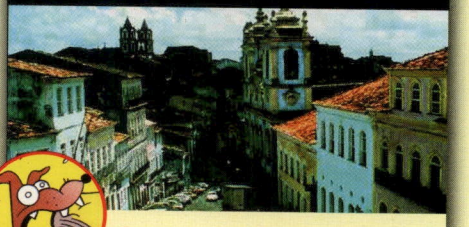
THE KOOKS MUSEUM



http://www.teleport.com/~dkossy/

Donna Kossy's uttery nutterly exhibition of brain-washers, schizoids, bloodsucking bugs and hubcap cathedrals is as righteously retarded as ever.

LONELY PLANET ON-LINE



http://www.lonelyplanet.com.au

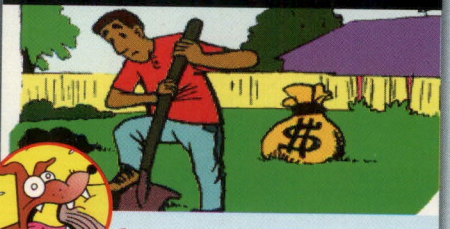
On with the HTML rucksack as the InterRailer's best friend reveals how to live like a king in Qualalumpa on just a few pesos. Possibly.

INTERNET MOVIE DATABASE

http://uk.imdb.com/

The world's population has sat through far too many movies. And here's proof – many a Netter's First Ever Bookmark.

LEARN2.COM



http://www.learn2.com

How to remove stains, make paper aeroplanes, chuck oysters and juggle eggs. The "ability utility" has the answer to *nearly* everything.

LUMIERE

http://www.lumiere.com

Rub shoulder pads with Gaultier or just gossip with Kate and Naomi before sauntering down this cybercatwalk of haute couture. It's a fashion 'zine.

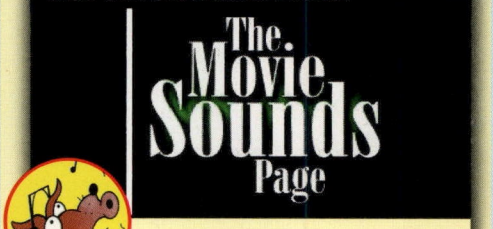
Net Dog's Essential Selection

MARVEL UNIVERSE

http://www.marvelcomics.com

Hulk see puny superhero Web site. Hulk see Captain America 3D animation, Spider-Man sneaky previews and more. Hulk go buy modem.

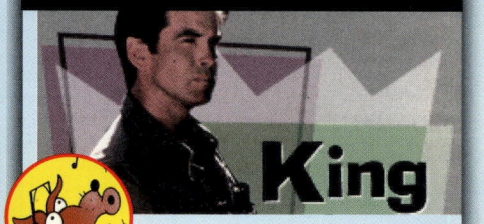
MOVIE SOUNDS PAGE



http://www.moviesounds.com

Star Trek bleeps, psycho shouts from *Full Metal Jacket* and more *Pulp Fiction* quotes than you could ever need. A one-stop sonic shop.

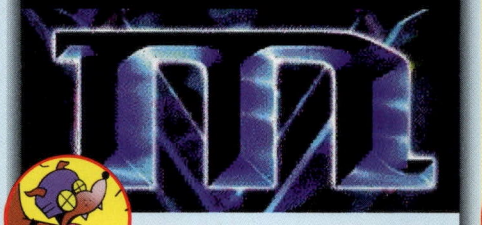
MR SHOWBIZ



http://www.mrshowbiz.com

The pick of the flicks with the slick 'n' sassy Hollyzine. Celeb games, killer interviews and the best movie reviews out there in Webland.

METAVERSE



http://metaverse.com

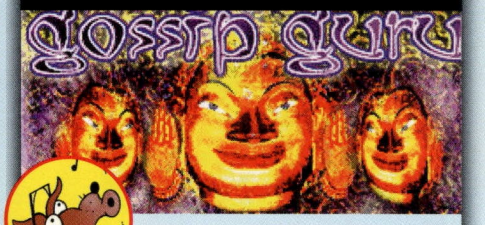
On-line repository for all manner of hepness from ex-MTV VJ, Adam Curry. CyberSleaze supplies the goss while The Vibe gives you the, er, vibes.

MR CRANKY

http://internet-plaza.net/zone/mrcranky

Barry Norman with a side serving of bile, Mr Cranky rates and slates the latest movies with all the sympathy of a serial killer.

MTV ONLINE

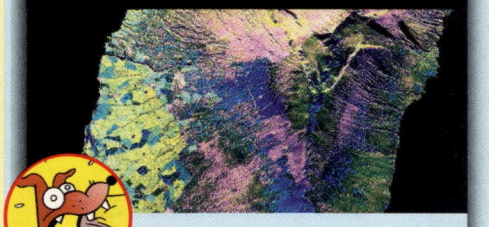


http://www.mtv.com

Blipvert culture comes home with MTV's none-more-swanky mish-mash of news, views and video clips to soothe your aching retinas.

RESOURCE DOG:
Who needs libraries when you have the Net? Travel guides, news and unstuffy researchy stuff – expand your brain without a shred of paper in sight.

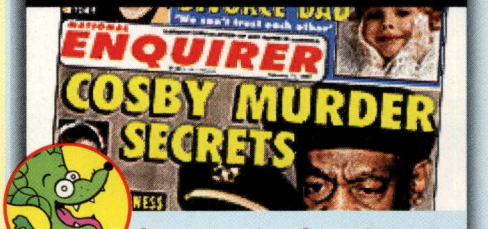
NASA



http://www.nasa.gov

Who needs science fiction when science fact is even weirder? NASA's astrocameras report back from the cosmos with sights to amaze.

NATIONAL ENQUIRER

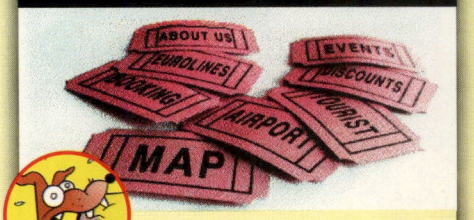


http://.nationalenquirer.com

"News flash!!! Elvis seen snogging Boris Yeltsin's alien doppelgänger in seedy cybercafé while perusing trashy tabloid Web site!!!!!"

Net Dog's Essential Selection

NATIONAL EXPRESS



http://www.nationalexpress.co.uk

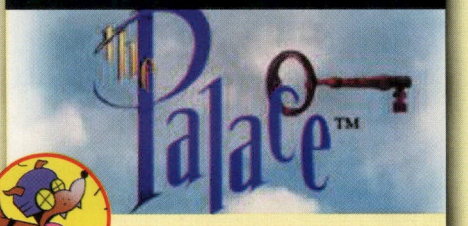
An end to queuing with this on-line ticket ordering gizmo. Fancy the train instead? Try RailTrack for the same deal **(http://www.railtrack.co.uk).**

NEW SCIENTIST

http://www.newscientist.com

The universe is finally explained with the rocket scientist's favourite magazine now on-line. You come, you click, you feel your brain triple in size.

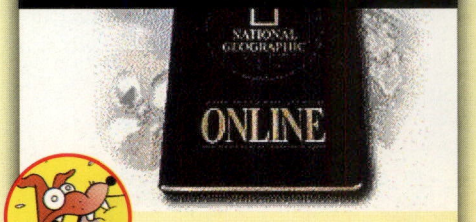
THE PALACE



http://www.thepalace.com/

A free preview of the ace Virtual Chat forum in which you blunder around themed mazes chatting to like-minded M&M-disguised Netters.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



http://nationalgeographic.com

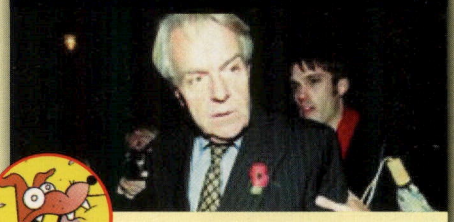
From Amazon to Zulu, America's niftiest natural history magazine hikes on-line to put the world back into the Web.

NME

http://www.nme.com

No more inky fingers as The World's Biggest Selling Rock Weekly™ rants and raves about the bands you'll be listening to six months from now.

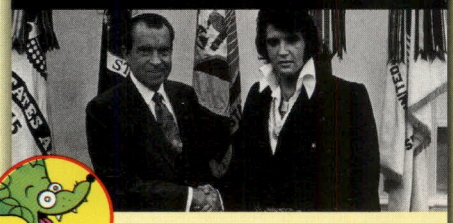
PRESS ASSOCIATION NEWS



http://www.pa.press.net/

Information overdose! The UK's bestest news agency space-mails over 400,000 words of news and views straight on to your browser.

NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE



http://www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchive

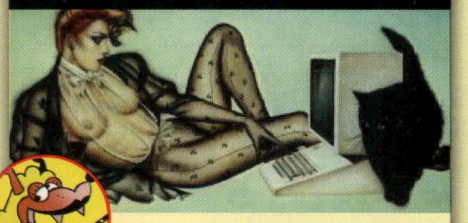
Public archive for the now declassified guffs and gaffs made by Nixon, the CIA and virtually anyone else in the Oval Office. The truth is in here.

OBSOLETE

http://www.obsolete.com

Goldie junglist gyrations, multimedia mayhem and Moby's personal home page... Obsolete is THE e-zine for the dance scene.

PERSIAN KITTY



http://www.persiankitty.com

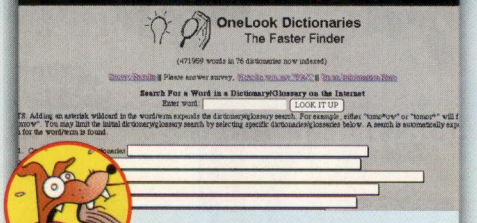
A smut-u-like links palace for the naughtier Netscaper. "Purrs, claws and curiosity will get you anywhere..." is this cat's motto and it ain't wrong.

NAUGHTY LINX

http://www.naughty.com

Heeeeello boys! Hanky spanky, Yahoo!-alike search engine that will send you shuffling to the saucier parts of the Web double quick.

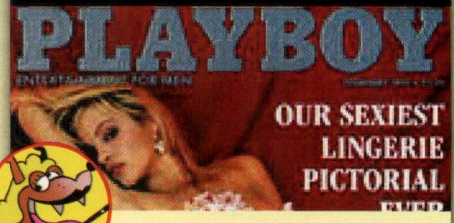
ONELOOK DICTIONARIES



http://www.onelook.com

You want dictionaries? You got dictionaries. And that's English, Medical, Internet, Science, Religion, Sports...

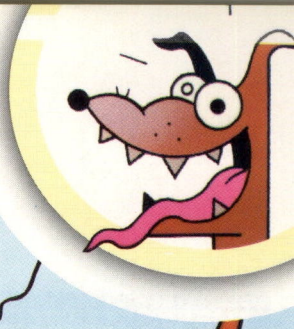
PLAYBOY

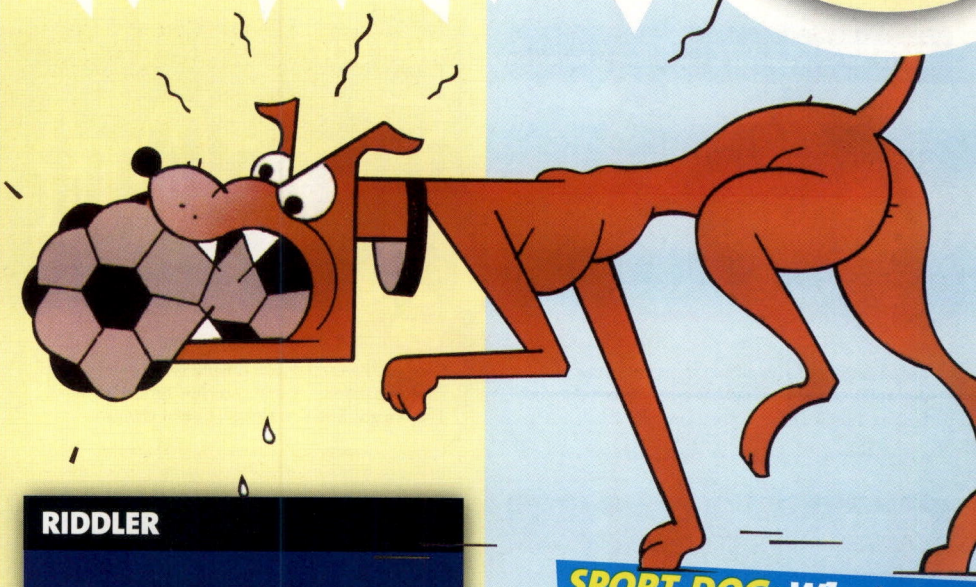


http://www.playboy.com

Hefner's ultra-saucy blend of tip-top editorial, exclusive prose and nekkid ladies goes all digital. Bookmark it "just for the interviews", naturally...

Net Dog's Essential Selection





PRANKSTA'S PARADISE

http://www.voicenet.com/~mika

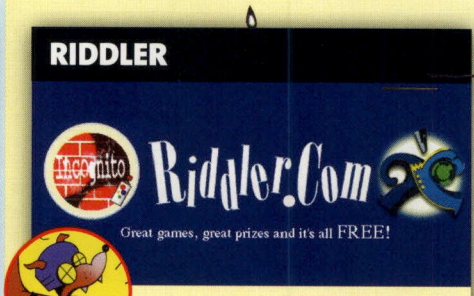
The practical jokes page to pillage if you want to destroy your ex-friend's life. Juvenile, highly dangerous and, inevitably, hilarious.

REEL

http://www.reel.com

I Can't Believe It's Not Magic! Rate a selection of movies and then watch as Reel recommends an eerily spot-on selection of choice viewing.

RIDDLER

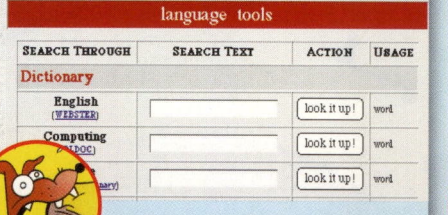


http://www.riddler.com

A nefarious brain-mangler of a puzzle site that uses a mix of bizarre trivia, intellectual sadism and big prizes to keep you clicking and guessing.

SPORT DOG: Whatever match on whatever day on whatever game... The best of the Net's results services and fit clicks for the armchair athlete.

RESEARCH-IT!



http://www.iTools.com/research-it/research-it.html

Quote servers, translators, dictionaries, currency converters... Look right bloody clever with the only resource database you'll ever need.

SALON

http://www.salonmagazine.com

Smart and sussed, yet always sassy, Salon is the multi-cultural e-zine that's as groovy as it is eggheaded. The Web is now officially cool.

60 GREATEST CONSPIRACIES

http://www.webcom.com/~conspire/

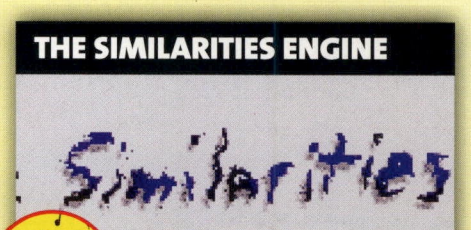
Is Comet Hale-Bopp the apocalyptic ticket? Does the Grassy Knoll know something we don't? Is your uncle an alien? The unbelievable truth is here.

RETE! THE INTERNATIONAL

http://www.vol.it/RETE_/homerete.html

Watch Netcasts of AC Milan, study the away record of Bocca Juniors and laugh at Torquay United in this globe-trotting footy database.

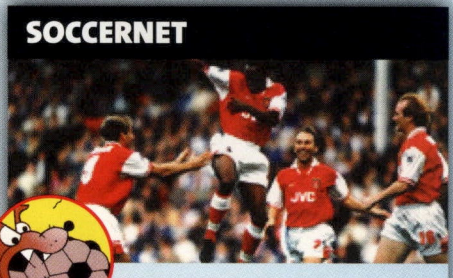
THE SIMILARITIES ENGINE



http://www.ari.net/se/

Record collections and Internet connections in harmonious mix shock. An instant hit with Webheads – just don't ask 'em how it works.

SOCCERNET



http://www.soccernet.com

A *Daily Mail*-affiliated footy shrine for the stats fiend in your office. Crammed with profiles, gossip and one of the Net's best results services.

Net Dog's Essential Selection

THE SPORTSPOT

http://www.sportspot.com/

Keep up to date with all ball sports in easily digestible snippets of news. Caustic Comment and Betting Tip Of The Day are especially ace.

TIME OUT

Time Out

http://www.timeout.co.uk/

Click up the capital with the ultimate London, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin and New York city guides. They've got The Knowledge, free of charge.

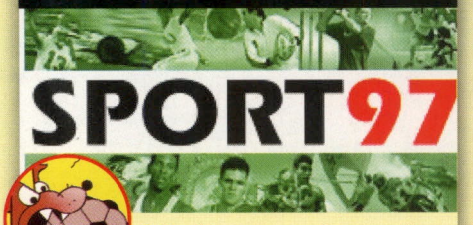
TRIGGER

trigger

http://www.trigger.co.uk/

Using a clickable daisy control system, this UK e-zine gulps pop culture and burps it back with rasping confidence.

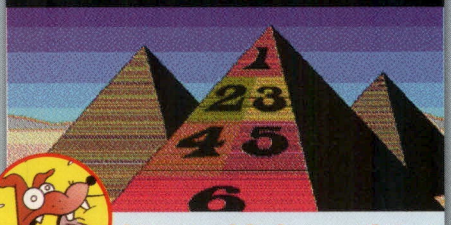
SPORT 97



http://www.sport97.com/

What's on in the world of sport during 1997? A comprehensive interactive events calendar to twirl the moustache of every Des Lynham wannabe.

THRIVE



http://pathfinder.com/thrive/

Click away that waistline or just work out your emotions with Thrive's feel-good guide to health, wealth and aerobics-related happiness.

TV NET

http://tvnet.com/index.html

Square eyes squared towards the home to that most mashed of couch potatoes, The Ultimate TV List. Still dominated by American content, mind...

SUCK

http://www.suck.com/

Happy-go-cynical satirical slackers grip the throat of Net culture and give it a good throttling. Floops, a 3D VRML cartoon character, is a neat touch.

TECHNOSPHERE

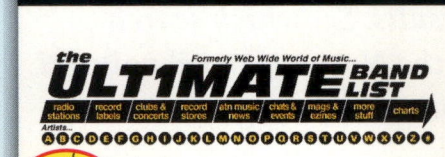
http://www.technosphere.org.co.uk

Create a virtual monster, give it a stupid name, hurl it into Technosphere's arena and wait for it to get eaten by a giant nerd.

CULTURE DOG: *If it's on the screen, spins in a console or shrieks from a stereo, follow the howling head for instant Net entertainment nirvana.*

Net Dog's Essential Selection

THE ULTIMATE BAND LIST



http://www.ubl.com/

Starting with *Abba*, stopping off at *Neutral Milk Hotel* and crashing out at *ZZ Top*, this has to be your first call for any pop-related Web queries.

THE WEB 100

http://www.web100.com

Don't agree with our selection? Make your clicking count by rating and reviewing your fave sites in this hourly updated Web 100 alternative.

WWW SCI-FI GUIDE

http://weber.u.washington.edu/~ataraxus/sfmenu.html

An exhaustive account of futures past and present, this sci-fi cinema linkorama is simply hoverboots above the rest.

URBAN LEGENDS ARCHIVE

http://www.urbanlegends.com/

Whether it's Hollywood stars wrangling with rodents or just those sewer-dwelling alligators, this scurrilous rumour mill tells it like it allegedly is.

THE WHY FILES

http://whyfiles.news.wisc.edu

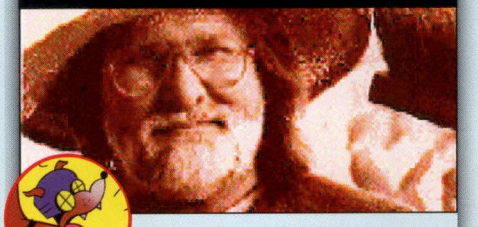
If in doubt, ask a robot... The Why Files explains the universe's foibles in this scientific take on *The Guardian*'s 'Notes & Queries'.

YAHOO UK

http://www.yahoo.co.uk

Yaaay! No more cooling this and sucking that! Yahoo's very own UK-heavy directory is improving by the nanosecond.

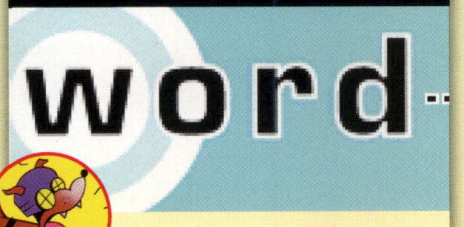
WEB DEL SOL



http://www.cais.net/aesir/fiction

A highfalutin but sublimely cool literary e-zine dedicated to poetry, fiction and all manner of Web-friendly chapter and verse.

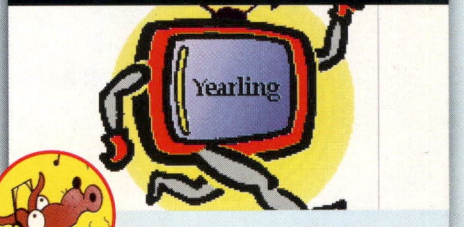
WORD



http://www.word.com

Another swanky e-zine from Uncle Sam's more learned offspring. Short stories, killer cartoons and enough quirksome features to keep you clicking.

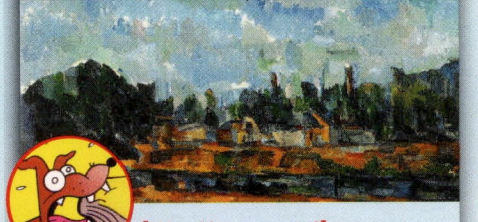
YEARLING



http://www.yearling.com/

Totally tuned in. Kind of like the *Radio Times* pre-ticked by your electronic alter ego, Yearling picks your week's telly-staring for you.

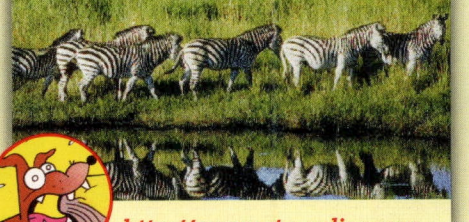
WEBMUSEUM



http://www.southern.net/wm

A Paris-based virtual art gallery boasting canvases from Rembrandt to Mondrian and just about everyone in between.

WORLD TRAVEL GUIDE



http://www.wtg-online.com

Zipping around the world in under 80 clicks, this real-world bestseller is a must for travel nuts. Now the only danger is a severe case of Netlag.

ZELDMAN

http://www.zeldman.com/

"Open wide..." Nice Mr Zeldman is here to humanise your desktop with an insane selection of iconic eye candy. Fast, fun and completely free.

FETCH!

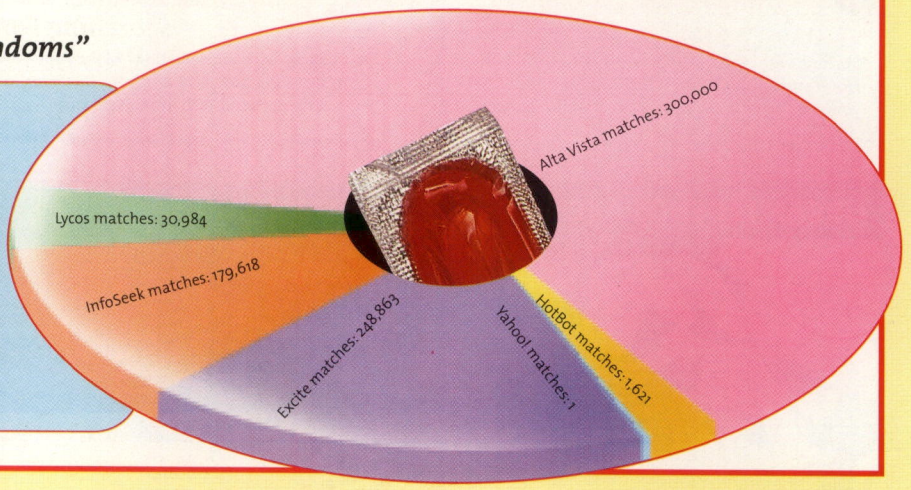
Take six search engines, six devilishly dissimilar topics and yes, six ever-changing "things" to track down on-line. Sit back and wait for results. So, which search engine will be the all-conquering king of hits? And which will be the Norwegian nil pointer? And what's best – quantity or quality? Let Net Dog's meaty pie charts be your guide...

Sexy!

Searching For "Fruit Condoms"

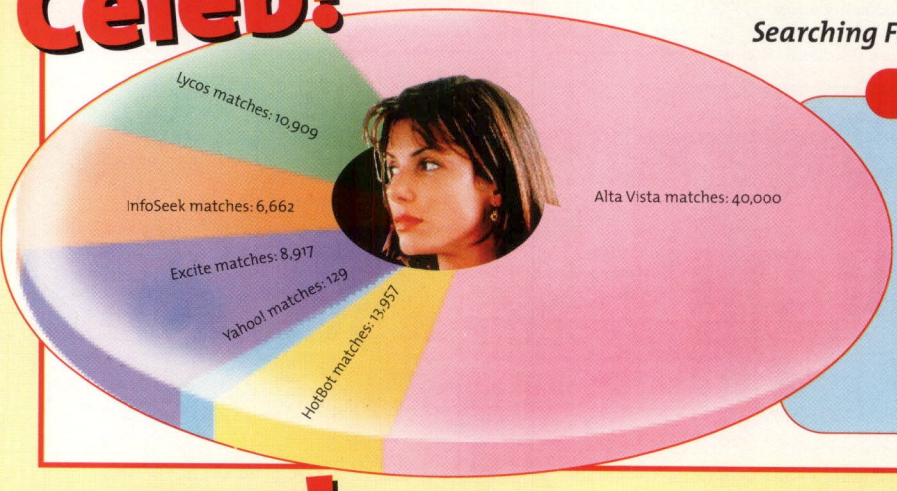
Lycos Result

Condomania
http://www.condomania.com/
Too timid or just plain knackered to make that condom run to the late-night garage? On-line johnny emporium Condomania is the unfortunately USA-based answer to your wettest dreams. Place your order for glow-in-the-dark "knight lights" (rise and shine!), cinnamon-flavoured "motion lotions" or even "penis pasta". They're great with meatballs, apparently...



Celeb!

Searching For "Sandra Bullock"



Alta Vista Result

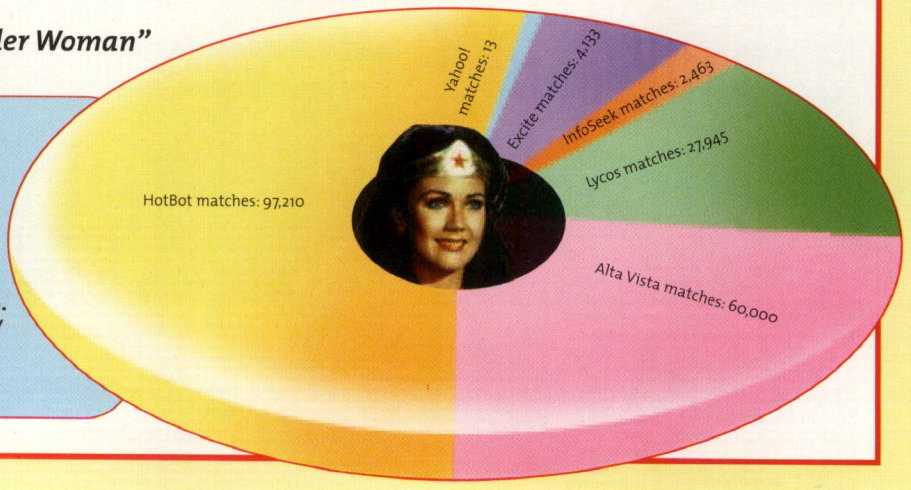
Sandra Bullock – SuperStar
http://www.sandra-bullock.org
She's America's cutie-pie queen, she starred with bostin' Steve Austin in TV "blockbuster" *Bionic Showdown*, she's mates with Dennis Leary and she once had an America Online account... She is Sandra Bullock and, to anyone who's now frantically typing in that Web address, this trivia-addled site does NOT have those infamous fake photographs. What it does have, however, is everything else. Ever ever ever...

Retro!

Searching For "Wonder Woman"

HotBot Result

Wonder Woman WWW Page
http://wonderwoman.simplenet.com/
With a shiny tiara, a magic lasso and that all too prominent Wonderbra (geddit?), legend could only be a Web site away. For photographs, rare video clips, bizarre trivia and the lyrics to THAT superbly cheesy song, you now know where to go. Altogether now: "All the world is waiting for you/ And the power you possess/In your satin tights/ Fighting for your rights..."



FETCH!

KEY

HotBot http://www.HotBot.com/

Excite http://www.excite.com/

Alta Vista http://www.altavista.digital.com/

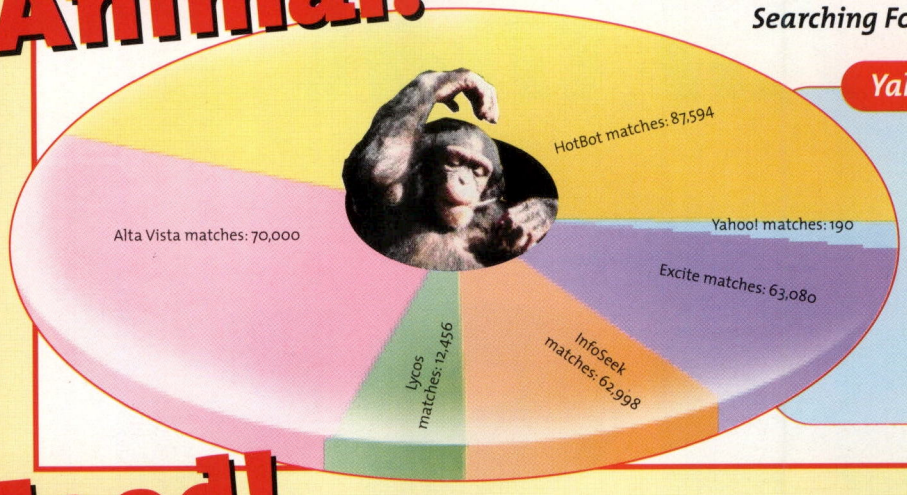
Lycos http://www.lycos.com/

InfoSeek http://www.infoseek.com/

Yahoo! http://www.yahoo.com/

Animal!

Searching For "Monkey"



Yahoo! Result

Pet Marmoset Monkey Site

http://www.club.innet.be/~year1531/

Once the sweetest simian this side of Cheetah, the Brazilian fur ball is now revealed as a mini-monster on this, the "only pet monkey site in BELGIUM!!!" You want a marmoset? Perhaps you should come here first... But wannabe monkey muzzler beware: Marmosets devour lizards, grasshoppers and snails, don't like to be handled, are vicious biters and can never, ever be toilet trained.

Food!

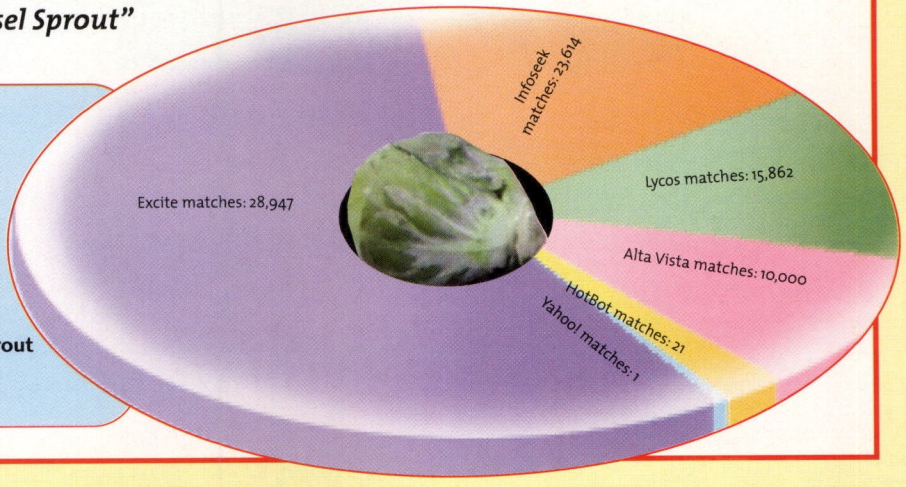
Searching For "Brussel Sprout"

Excite Result

Vegetable Production Guides

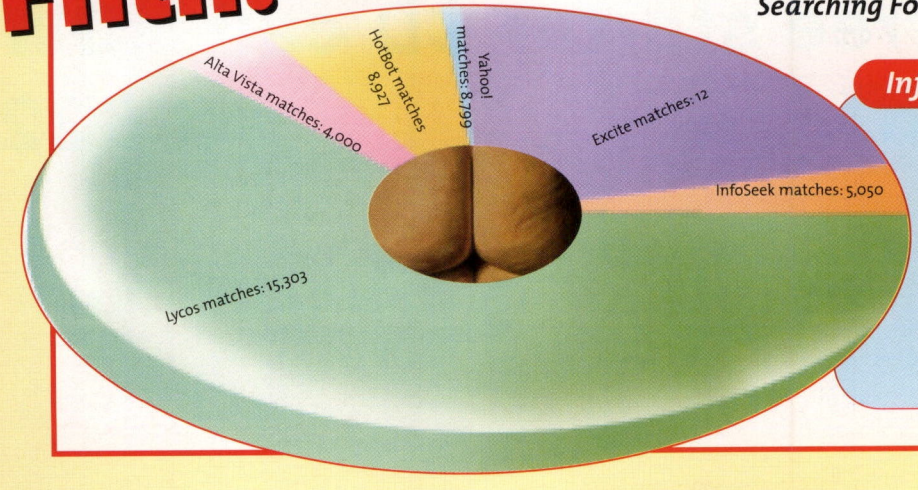
http://www.orst.edu/Dept/NWREC/brussprt.html

On those days when you just have to know the correct soil pH for growing brussel sprouts or need to combat an attack of slime mould on your veg, turn to the mighty Vegetable Production Guide. Follow the atomic equations therein, pray to Maureen, Norse Goddess Of All Root Crops and soon a bountiful harvest will sprout majestically from the earth. Or go to your local greengrocer. Whatever.



Filth!

Searching For "Arse"



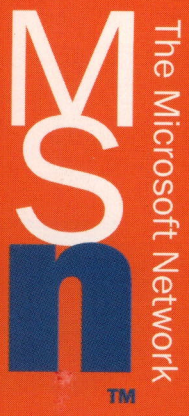
InfoSeek Result

Guess The Arse

http://www.dustbin.demon.co.uk/arse.htm

Monkeys may very well fly out of the American "ass", but yer Blighty arse is there for one thing and one thing alone – mooning. Guess The Arse features twinsets of cheeks displayed in various states of undress and your challenging task is to guess the not-so-proud owner. Or not to bother. Which is what we did. As might you.

NET DOG'S LINKORAMA CONTINUES NEXT MONTH



New MSN™ from Microsoft.®

All that Internet stuff made easy.

MSN, the Microsoft Network, is the easy way for Microsoft Windows 95® users to get online. Like a TV, its six channels will help you navigate the Net. And incredibly, anything you need is only two clicks away.

For a month's free† trial of MSN and the Internet and a free starter CD call NOW on 0345 00 2000 ext 622.

Microsoft

Where do you want to go today?™

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†Some restrictions apply. Call for details. Telephone connection and call charges not included. MSN requires Microsoft Windows 95 and a modem. ©Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Windows, Where do you want go today? and MSN are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the US and/or other countries.

Health

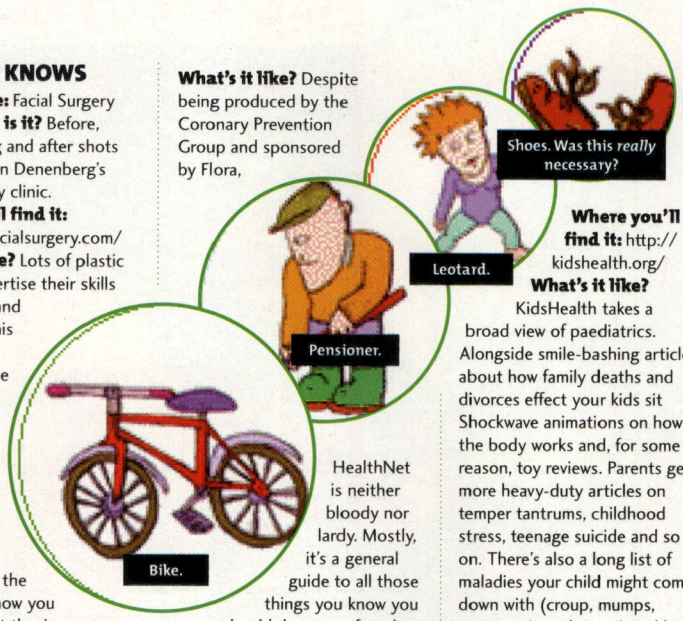
IN THE PINK: **MARY LOJKINE**
mhlojkin@dircon.co.uk

THE NOSE KNOWS

Name: Facial Surgery
What is it? Before, during and after shots from Dr Steven Denenberg's plastic surgery clinic.
Where you'll find it: http://www.facialsurgery.com/
What's it like? Lots of plastic surgeons advertise their skills with befores and afters. "See this ugly great schnozzle? See this cute little button nose? You too could have the proboscis you've always wanted." Few, however, have the audacity to show you EXACTLY what they're going to do to the lump in the middle of your face. Dr Denenberg is the exception, presenting a lavishly illustrated, step-by-gruesome-step guide to nasal sculpture. Never again need you wonder what a nose job entails.
Upside: The enthusiastic explanations of the cutting, peeling, crunching and remoulding operations are strangely compelling.
Downside: You don't want to know what the inside of your nose looks like. And we're not going to show you.
Typical quote: "As we continue to lift the skin off of the cartilage framework of the nose, we see the cartilage that forms the dorsum of the nose (coloured red in the diagram)."
Overall: ★★★★

HAVE A HEART

Name: HealthNet
What is it? A guide to all the things that are good for your heart.
Where you'll find it: http://www.healthnet.org.uk/
What's it like? Despite being produced by the Coronary Prevention Group and sponsored by Flora,



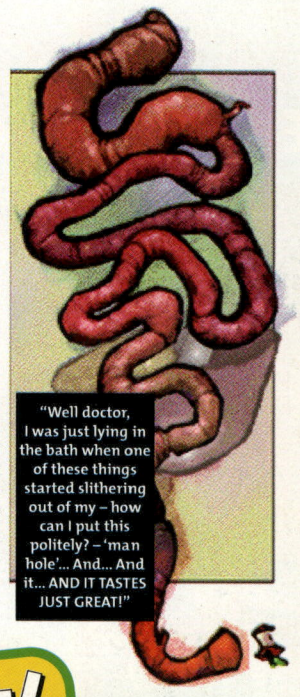
HealthNet is neither bloody nor lardy. Mostly, it's a general guide to all those things you know you should do more of, such as exercise, or less of, such as smoking. Scratchy cartoons give the impression that you're in for some welcome cynicism, but the underlying text is unfortunately drier than a desiccated corpse. The only spark of life comes from two embryonic Web soaps, which deliver a less turgid take on having a healthy lifestyle.
Upside: The margarine-related content is restricted to just a few recipes.
Downside: Enormous graphics clog up your modem and reduce the information flow to the brain. And it's hard to read the handwritten text.
Typical quote: "A lot of people in the UK enjoy trainspotting. Here's another good example of how you can incorporate exercise into a hobby by walking or cycling to the station."
Overall: ★★

LET'S PLAY DOCTOR

Name: KidsHealth
What is it? A great big jolly grab bag of health-related articles for kids, parents and health professionals.
Where you'll find it: http://kidshealth.org/
What's it like? KidsHealth takes a broad view of paediatrics. Alongside smile-bashing articles about how family deaths and divorces effect your kids sit Shockwave animations on how the body works and, for some reason, toy reviews. Parents get more heavy-duty articles on temper tantrums, childhood stress, teenage suicide and so on. There's also a long list of maladies your child might come down with (croup, mumps, pneumonia and so on) and how to deal with them.
Upside: Lots of clear, detailed information presented with cheerful piccies and brisk common sense.
Downside: Some of the lengthy explanations may be a tad too sophisticated for younger kids.
Typical quote: "So you wear glasses? Millions of kids do! With glasses, you'll be able to see clearly. Glasses are cool." *And* you can drink out of them too, y'know...
Overall: ★★★★★

TOMORROW'S DOC

Name: Medical Tribune
What is it? A fortnightly round-up of medical news.
Where you'll find it: http://www.medtrib.com/
What's it like? Although Medical Tribune occasionally descends into stuffy, incomprehensible jargon, most of the stories are accessible to laypeople. It covers public health issues (such as cell-phone-related car accidents) as well as the techy leading edge topics (cryosurgery, gene therapy...) and is a good source of miscellaneous *Tomorrow's World*-style facts. Admittedly, there's a distinct reek of TCP, but the regular Physician Faceoff does at least enable two of the coolly clinical experts to have a polite argument about a current health issue.
Upside: It's intriguing to browse through and includes a decent search facility.
Downside: Just how much of this material do you *really* need to know?
Typical quote: "Using a cellular phone while driving a car is associated with a quadrupling of the risk of collision during and just after a call, according to a new study."
Overall: ★★★★

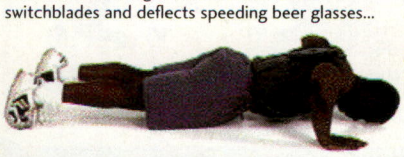


HotSpot!

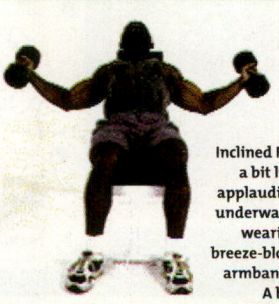
Name: Men's Health On-line
What is it? A health and fitness site for blokes based on the excellent Earth publication.
Where you'll find it: http://www.menshealth.com/index.html
What's it like? Men's Health starts with the important things – muscles, sex and food – then works its way down to general health issues and miscellaneous "guy stuff". The approach is blokey rather than New Man and tackles everything from what to do with a wonky penis (there's a drug which might help unnatural bends) to how to stop your shoes from stinking of week-old Wensleydale (soak your feet in strong tea). Most of the content is below the belt and/or personal, but the tone's light-hearted and you shouldn't be too mortified if your girlfriend catches you browsing this site.
Upside: Lots of interactive stuff, including quizzes and animated GIFs demonstrating all the ways you can abuse your body with weights.
Downside: The Flashpoll claims the average *Men's Health* reader can bench press 24,121 lbs and works out 845,047 times a week. We think it might be broken...
Typical quote: "Be sure that your feet are secure before you start the exercise. Once you fall off a bench it's hard to win back any respect from the guys at the gym."

THE MEN'S HEALTH GUIDE TO KEEPING FAT

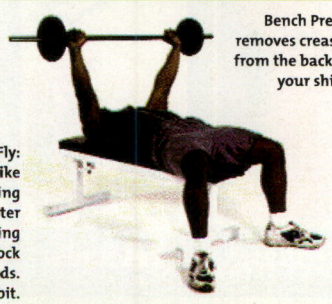
Bulletproof vests are for sissies. Here's how to get the kind of sandbag-stuffed chest that bends switchblades and deflects speeding beer glasses...



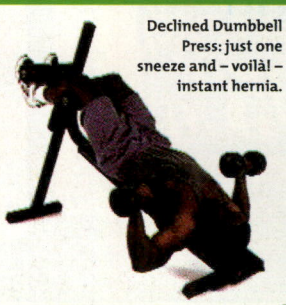
Weighted Pushups: make like the Pope.



Inclined Fly: a bit like applauding underwater wearing breeze-block armbands. A bit.



Bench Press: removes creases from the back of your shirt.



Declined Dumbbell Press: just one sneeze and – voilà! – instant hernia.

The Net

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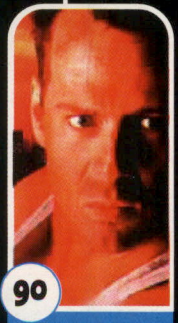
Illustration: Nancy Toford

Who are we to judge?

Our monthly round-up of the more spurious Web Awards...

http://www.geocities.com/Area51/3493/index.html

http://www.silcom.com/~tonkin/pointless



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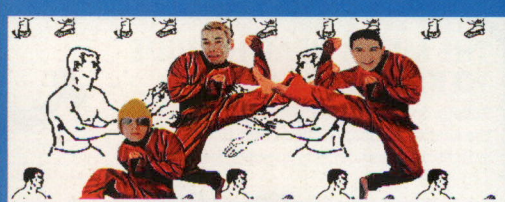


The Kung Fu Boogaloo Beastie Boys

http://hollywoodandvine.com/Beastie/beastie.html

Nigel Floyd

Illiterits of the wurld unite! You have nothink to loose but yor spellchekkers... With the Wurld Wide Wob being updated at such a furius rate, sintax is suffering at thuh hands of the user.

It's ironic that the majority of apocalyptic statements made about language on the Internet should concern themselves with the predominance of English, to the virtual exclusion of all other national tongues. More worrying by far, it seems to me, is the imminent destruction of the English language itself. In its inadequate virtual form it's become a scrappy, ungrammatical and woefully misspelled shadow of its former, printed self.

To a limited extent, this may be due to the fact that, for many Net users (in particular, Americans), English is a second language. Or it may simply be that the appaling standard of writing found across the World Wide Web and in Usenet newsgroups merely reflects the equally abysmal standards of literacy that prevail here and in the United States. Whatever the root cause, a medium that was originally intended to encourage and improve worldwide communication has instead become a dumping ground for verbal diarrhoea, excreted by people who probably think a semicolon is part of their lower intestine.

A medium meant to improve communication has become a dumping ground for verbal diarrhoea, excreted by people who probably think the semicolon is part of their lower intestine.

Nevertheless, there's an explicit taboo against pointing out such aberrations. This tactless misdemeanour is perfectly summed up in the "newbies'" guide to newsgroups featured in the *May* issue of *Connect's* sister publication, *.net:* "Don't criticise others for their misspelling or bad grammar, but make sure you use correct spelling and grammar yourself." Bollocks! This so-called Netiquette mantra preaches tolerance, but to tolerate is to ignore, and we ignore these linguistic manglers at our own peril. Unless we're prepared to allow on-line English to become a completely seperate (sic) and debased form of discourse, there's a definate (sic) case for taking to task those who offend the basic laws of spelling, grammer (sic) and syntax.

To illustrate my point, here's an example from the popular movie news site, Ain't It Cool!!! (shouldn't there be a question mark in there somewhere?): "Last night's two and a half hour director's cut of *Face Off* was attended by John Woo and it went pretty damn good. It seems that these Hat wearing fellows thought this was the best product that Woo has done yet on our shores here in the USA."

The standard defence for such sloppily-expressed drivel is one espoused by the Internet gurus of *Wired* magazine, in their earthbound and impeccably-spelled book, *Wired Style: Principles Of English Usage In The Digital Age.* Writing on the Net, they assert, isn't about being bound by "the shackles of grammar", but about communication.

The problem with this flimsy argument for freedom of expression is that it tacitly ignores the straightforward fact that grammar and effective communication are inextricably linked. What these liberal defenders of illiteracy mean by communication is what I would call sloppily-written personal expression, stream-of-consciousness bullshit or *Loaded*-style pub talk.

So, please, let's have less special pleading on behalf of the syntactically challenged, and more concern for the grammatical niceties of clear, concise on-line communication. If that's not too much to ask...

WEBCAM COMAS

"This month we have mostly been watching..."

The Almost Amazing Turtle Cam

http://campusware.com/turtles/

YER ICONS AND YER RATINGS

Web site

Newsgroup

HotSpot!
The must-see site of the month

★★★★★
Near Net perfection

★★★★
Well worth a click

★★★
Above average

★★
Mostly mediocre

★
Cyberplop, frankly

Nothing quite beats the bong of an e-mail from one of your e-mates, but you don't have to confine yourself to a limited circle of chatter and click. Mary Lojkine finds there's much more to e-mail than meets the mouse...

E-mail for

Illustrations by Nancy Tolford

You wake up, you get up, you drink a cup of coffee, and you turn on the computer. It's time for that moment of truth: do you have any mail? Bong, a memo from your service provider. Bong, a message from a mailing list. Bong... Er, that's it. Looks like you need an e-makeover.

E-mail is quick. Great. It's cheap. Cheers. It's convenient. Yawn. You wouldn't get up for less than 10,000 messages a day if e-mail didn't have at least a couple of redeeming features. It's personal, interactive, high tech and trendy. And while it's not quite as good as a holographic phone with built-in toast rack, it's way better than the 26-penny post.

E-mail isn't nearly as much fun if you aren't getting any, though. If all your mates are still hanging out in letter-and-stampville, sign up for a couple of mailing lists **(http://www.liszt.com/)** or try getting e-zines by e-post **(http://propagandist.com/tkemzl/index.html).** Kellogg's Better Breakfast Briefing (sign on at **http://www.kelloggs.com)** drops the latest news, sport, weather forecasts and TV listings into your mailbox every morning, and countless other sites deliver regular dollops of delight. Cheer yourself up with a daily joke **(http://www.joker.org/),** test yourself with a weekly mystery **(http://www.thecase.com/)** or veg out with a virtual pizza **(http://www2.ecst.csuchico.edu/~pizza/)** – no charge for home delivery.

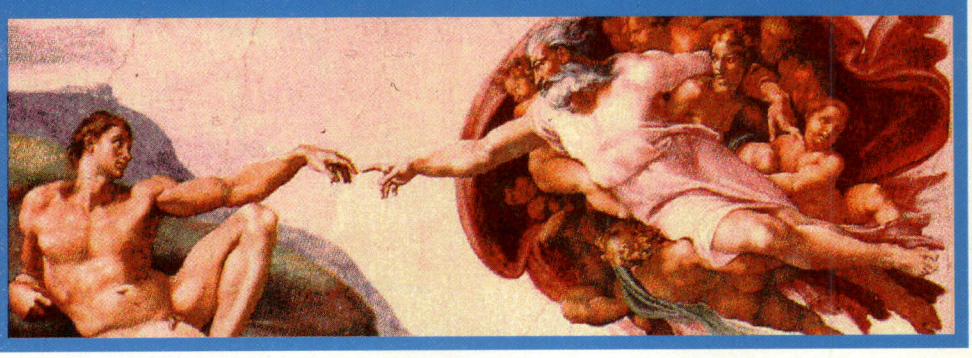
Passive consumerism might be the number one pastime of the slacker '90s, but it won't help you achieve world domination. E-games, on the other

Give Me Salvation

Lots of people think that the Internet is packed with perverts and weirdos, but they're wrong. It's positively teaming with nice people who'd love to help you out.

The Prayer Connection **(http://pages.prodigy.com/prayer/)** combines technology with good old traditional values to provide you with a personalised prayer service. Members take requests by e-mail and will pray for you every day for a week, if you so desire, in the strictest confidence: "Father, please bless the unknown person who contacted me by anonymous e-mail."

If you've fallen out with God, you could always try The Samaritans (e-mail **jo@samaritans.org).** The Net isn't as reliable as the phone system, so it would be silly to take the pills before you send your message, but otherwise you get the same non-judgmental service as regular callers.



you...

hand, enable you to conquer small countries and indulge your delusions of extreme power. You can play anything from draughts **(http://www.noord.bart.nl/~damnet/draughts.html)** to fantasy football **(http://www.madmark.demon.co.uk/qu.html** and **http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Field/1913/EUSLHOME.htm)** to complicated role-playing games **(http://www.pbem.com/).** If you can't be bothered with all that rolling and counting, the dice server **(http://www.irony.com/mailroll.html)** will throw a few electronic polyhedrons on your behalf and mail the results.

The e-mail version of Mortal Kombat **(http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Arcade/5840/index.html)** doesn't have the fast action and visceral pleasures of the original, but you'll still find 40-odd mean-looking e-fighters hammering away. "I liked the [Mortal Kombat] card game," says referee Chris Rickman, "and I had the idea that a variation of it might be fun to play over e-mail. Playing a fighting game this way is a bit of a different experience to playing an arcade machine, but that's my goal, to give people something different and fun." It's also a bit odd.

While Mortal Kombat has hundreds of moves, the irresistibly-named Bonk **(http://www-und.ida.liu.se/~c95janca/Eng-bonk.html)** has only three. "It started out as a normal play-by-mail – or, as a matter of fact, play-by-small-yellow-pieces-of-paper," says Bonkmaster Jan Carlson. "Setting it up on the Net was just a way to have fun and learn the mail system. Then I started to get e-mails from people all over the world wanting to Bonk and it seemed fun to make the game bigger. The attraction of playing against non-computers is that it feels way better to win against a real person..."

What price ruling the world, though, if there's no-one to share your triumphs? E-mail dating is safe (no dodgy pubs or nasty diseases), economical (no wining and dining) and avoids all that tiresome pulling in of guts and sticking out of chests. Most services charge, but WebPersonals **(http://www.webpersonals.com/)** is free, covers all possible gender combinations and automatically mails out ads meeting your criteria. It also provides an anonymous reply service for the truly, tragically shy.

E-mail dating is safe, economical and avoids all that tiresome pulling in of guts and sticking out of chests.

Once you've found your e-soulmate, you'll need to remember all those special dates. On-line florist Design'd To Go **(http://www.gbs.com/flowers/remind.htm)** sends out reminders anywhere from a month to a day before a birthday or anniversary, giving you time to compose that extra gooey message. If your software enables you to dispatch mail at specific times, you could set it up to send a message on the hour, every hour, throughout the day. Don't blame us, though, if you end up starring in a doesn't-the-entire-concept-just-make-you-want-to-crawl-into-a-hole-and-die? on-line wedding.

Gizza Job!

You're unemployed, you're on-line and you're desperate for work. Do you sit back and take it like a man? Or do you, like one Giancarlo Marchetti, use your initiative, nab a load of addresses from a directory and e-mail a bunch of complete strangers in the hope they'll swallow your story and give you a job? This genuine plea-mail was recently sent to a member of the *Connect* team. Full points for balls and inventiveness, nil points for spelling.

This is an HELP REQUEST MESSAGE don't delete it, but read it... PLEASE

My name is Giancarlo Marchetti, i'm 38 years old and i live near Bologna, in ITALY. My life is at the horn of a dilemma... But go in sequence. In 1980 i start works as teacher in memory and speed learning course. The company works with multilevel marketing system, and, for three years i was the first, or second salesman every month. I was the first italian teacher in memory course.

After three year i saw that these work cannot go away, and after a little time for looking around i start, (with a good friend) a company which sell book first and PC after. Business go well until 1991. A divorce (i have a baby) and the business crises put me out in 1994. In 1992, with a big know-how, i start as consultant in telemarketing, teleselling, and salesman hunting. What can i do? I was old for go into company (yes, in Italy after 30 year, no company want you) and i was young to die.

In 1995, selling all my property, i pay all debt and i remain only with some drawers. In 1994 to 1995 i had only one god and big customers: he go into bankruptcy at the first month of 1996 because CEO escape with $15 million: the cash of the company. From then, all my research to find work go into nothing. I'm also a discrete electrician, and i know electronics(as hobby and as work), i have also experiences in medical device like electrotherapy, magnetotherapy and iontophoresis: but there's no work for me, i'm old for all companies and i have no money to start my another company. I don't know if this is because the crises in Italy is very big, or because i become incompetent in a few seconds, or because my horoscope is negative, but my life is at the horn of a dilemma (remember?): i can stop eat (but my baby?), i can go down from a very high bridge, or i can become a criminal, or i MUST become an homeless. I DON'T WANT IT !!! No one of that way is good for me. I WANT WORK and restart.

And that is the reason of this message. PLEASE HELP ME !!! I can work everywere in the world (but i speak only english and not good), can work in italy in some market... Please think if you have a way you can put me out of this mud.

This is my ultimate hope. Until June 97 i have a Internet account, and so, if you want some information or want to speak with me please e-mail me.

All that you want to give me as help shall be very pleasant. Thank you.

Our pleasure, Giancarlo...

Come Customise

People fuss over and paint their letter boxes, so why not tailor your own e-mail system to represent The Real You? Follow these three simple steps and stamp your own distinctive identity among the on-line masses. There's more to customising your e-mail than gluing a doily on your modem and biroing your name on it...

1 READDRESS YOURSELF

Whatever your service provider might think, you're more than just a number. And you needn't be a meaningless jumble of letters either, because Starmail **(http://www.starmail.com/)** enables you to select an exotic new moniker by providing a forwarding service. If you've always wanted to be **swimsuit@bay-watch.com** or **fanfanfan@wetwetwet.com**, then you're an extremely sad person, but your dream just came true. You can even relocate to **crazysexycool.com, antisocial.com, itookmyprozac.com** or the not entirely convincing **trustme.com.** Mail is automatically forwarded to your regular address and it doesn't cost a bean.

2 WORK ON YOUR SIGNATURE

Once you've sorted out a shiny new identity, howsabout finishing off your messages with a chrome-coated signature? If you find you can't cover all your opinions with a single sound bite, ESig **(ftp://src.doc.ic.ac.uk/packages/Windows95/netutil/es9521.zip)** enables you to create a database of smart sayings that somehow sum you up and are randomly added to each message you send.

3 GET SOME STUPID SOUNDS

Finally, trade in that electronic bong for something more suited to your new, gizmo'd-up persona. AOL mail is accompanied by a velvet-voiced announcement from Joanna Lumley, and there's no reason why you should settle for anything less. Down-load a clip from The Absolutely Fabulous Sounds Archive **(http://www.loop.com/~raw/TV/abfab/archive.html)** and use the Sounds Control Panel to install it. Or, if Joanna Lumley isn't quite your cup of e, you can replace that over-familiar, bland bonging at The Wav Place **(http://www.wavplace.com/main.htm).** Down-load mail-related messages spewing from the sampled gobs of Bugs Bunny, Monty Python, *The Addams Family*, *Independence Day* and, our personal favourite, Homer Simpson ("The mail is here! Woo-hoo!" – **http://www.wavplace.com/wavs/feb/hsmail.wav).**

...and y E-f

Once you've found someone to write to, you need to think of Something To Say. There's always the weather **(http://www.meto.govt.uk/),** but today's gale nine at Channel Light Vessel Automatic soon seems little different from yesterday's mainly good at Forties, Cromarty And Fisher. Fortunately, the Web can produce any number of things that are far more amusing than the shipping forecast.

The Surrealist Compliment Generator **(http://pharmdec.wustl.edu/cgi-bin/jardin_scripts/SCG)** lives up to its name with comments such as, "You have the vocabulary of an aspidistra in panic," and, "Your face does bend even the most anorexic mirror into a sensuous playground of muscular spasms." They may not be entirely complimentary, but they certainly make you look deep. Or drunk. Alternatively, try running your friends' names through the anagram server **(http://www.genius2000.com/anagram.html)** and mailing them the best – or worst – of the results. Mary Helen Lojkine? Enjoy her mean kill. Enemy joker in hall. I'm a lonely jerk hen. Indeed.

The automatic complaint letter generator churns out well-constructed whinging. Cut, paste, post and wave goodbye to the rest of your friends.

The Cyrano Server **(http://www.nando.net/toys/cyrano/v2.1/)** composes Valentines, love letters and Dear John missives for the terminally tongue-tied, enabling you to conduct an entire relationship without having a single original thought. The results are a far cry from the hand-painted, lavender-scented love tokens of Victorian England, but the cheesy hearts and teddy bear icons more than make up for any perceived lack of personal input. If your dearly beloved feels otherwise, Scott Pakin's automatic complaint letter generator **(http://www-csag.cs.uiuc.edu/individual/pakin/complaint)** churns out paragraph after paragraph of well-constructed whinging. Cut, paste, post and wave goodbye to the rest of your friends.

Still stuck for words? Maybe you should just scrawl your message on an electronic card. Max Cards **(http://www.maxracks.com/)** enables you to inscribe suitably pithy sentiments on the

Hello me? It's me...

While the fun to be had with telephone directories is limited to making prank calls to people with stupid names like Mr Carrot or Mrs Bastard, you can be far more inventive with on-line directories. Internet white pages like Four11 **(http://www.four11.com)** stores hundreds and thousands of e-mail addresses, giving you the opportunity to get back in contact with old flames, past friends, distant relatives and even yourself.

In a moment of on-line boredom, Simon Crook slipped his own name into Four11's search engine, only to make the momentous discovery that he had a clone living in Ontario, Canada.

"Well, after locating your own alter ego, you can't help but satisfy your curiosity, so I e-mailed him with a stupid spooky message. He replied within an hour with a fence of exclamation marks. Turns out not only does my alter ego share exactly the same name (even down to the middle name), but our birthdays are only five days apart from each other. Unsettling, yes, but also pleasingly cranky. Since then, we've exchanged the odd stupid e-mail, but I've yet to get my invite to Canada. At least he isn't a psycho. Well, at least, I *think* he isn't a psycho..."

So, if you find yourself at a loose end on the Internet, why not try and find another you? You never know – they might be a kindly millionaire with a gap in their will. Or you could enter a mate's name into a directory and send him a surprise e-mail about his other e-self. If you have any success contacting your doppelgänger, we'd love to hear from you. Send your too-close-for-comfort encounters to **connect@futurenet.co.uk** and we'll print the best anecdotes in a future issue.

our mates

back of an e-postcard and dispatch it directly to your best mate, best mate's girl, best mate's girl's best mate or anyone else who takes your fancy. It's especially recommended for fashion victims (Calvin Klein and Donna Karan cards) and alcoholics (Tanqueray for the unrepentant; Volvic for the recently dried out).

Most other sites plonk your card and message on to a special Web page, then mail the address to your chosen recipient. If you're feeling gloomy, try Paul Romano's Crushed Card Company **(http://www.crushed.com/paulsplace.html).** His scratchy pencil drawings lend themselves to cheery messages such as, "I hope the dog bites you," and, "The boss kicked my arse". At the other end of the scale, Blue Mountain Arts **(http://www.bluemountain.com/)** proffers a splendid selection of schmaltzy animated cards, complete with plinky-plonky music and cloying sentiments such as, "When somebody dies a cloud turns into an angel". Yeah, right.

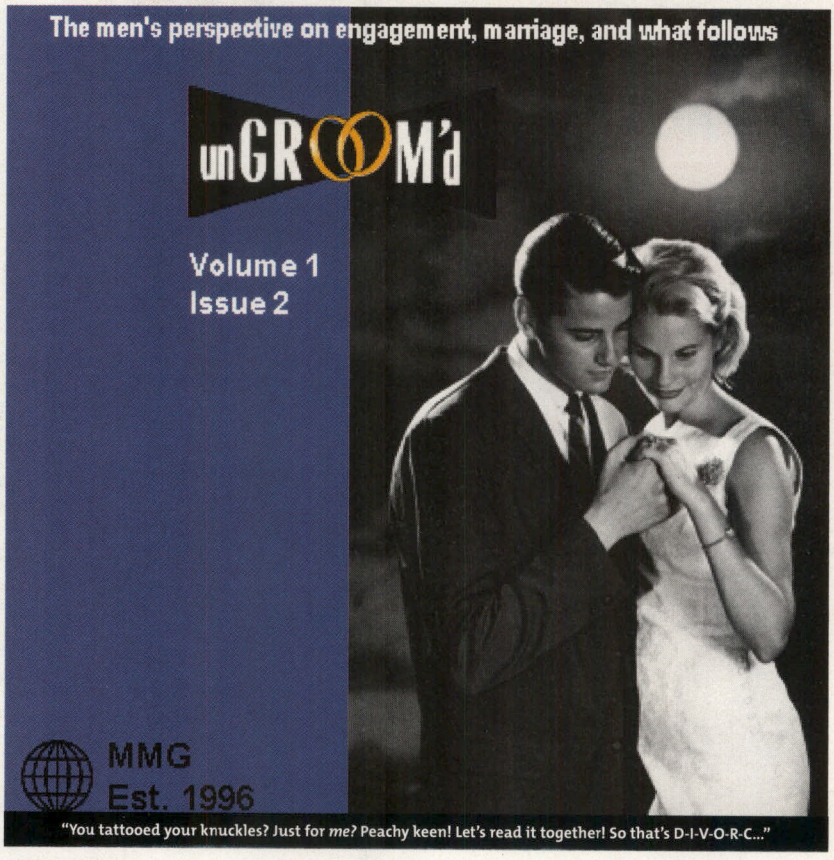
Or how about an e-present? Rummage through the overflowing skip at the Dumpster Diver **(http://www.connect-time.com/cgi-bin/dumpdive)** until you find something suitable tatty, then pack it off with your standard Royal Mail-style "I saw this and thought of you" comment. All the gifts are "pre-owned", but broken dolls, mouldy food and plastic flamingos are sooooo much more expressive than boring old flowers **(http://www.virtualflowers.com/).**

There's plenty of cack on the Web, so don't be selfish. Send it to your friends. Send it to your enemies. Hell, track down your old school dinner lady and send her a sandwich **(http://www.mayo.com/westmayo/cyber/cyber.html).** Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer both enable you to mail Web pages, so anything which appeals to your (twisted or otherwise) sense of humour can be parceled up and zinged into your mates' mailboxes – there's no escape...

Unfortunately, wit and wisdom are no substitute for a nicely written cheque, all crisp and pristine in a self-seal envelope. Still, once the digital cash people get their act together, you'll be able to win friends and influence people by handing out electronic dosh. More to the point, mornings will be so much better when there's the possibility of money in your mailbox. Bong...

E-zines

E-READING ON THE LOO: **MARK RAMSHAW**
markr@hoops.demon.co.uk



"You tattooed your knuckles? Just for *me*? Peachy keen! Let's read it together! So that's D-I-V-O-R-C..."

IN THE ACT

Name: Caught
What is it? Planet Britrock, sub-*NME* style.
Where you'll find it: http://www.caught.co.uk
What's it like? Ugly, thin on insight and seemingly happy to strut its stuff without the aid of a spellchecker. Nonetheless, Caught has bagged some decent Brit band interviews with the likes of *The Boo Radleys* and *Mansun*, and has a decent mix of live reviews, Q&As and competitions. For all its faults, it's impossible to dislike this e-zine. And, you never know, it could just spawn the next generation of real music journos.
Upside: Thoroughly successful in the pulse/finger interface department.
Downside: A little too sloppily written and roughly designed to be taken seriously.
Typical quote: "'Pop' is far from poppy and more a ragbag of introspective ambient doodlings peppered with hints of more recognisable *U2*."
Overall: ★★★

JIMMY HILL

Name: Chin
What is it? A goatee-sporting grab bag of snippets about music and various other elements of modern life.
Where you'll find it: http://www.itchyboris.demon.co.uk
What's it like? Well presented and distinctly moreish, which is rather a shame, given that each edition is painfully thin. The writing is wonderfully bitchy with a perfect measure of self-righteousness thrown in. This refreshing tone's maintained, even when the discussion is based around something as potentially mind-numbing as line-up changes in *Pulp*, whether *Placebo's* Brian Molko is cool or fool, or pooh-poohing the concept that there are certain kinds of exercise that will actually make you fatter. Which can't be bad.
Upside: Irrelevant cultural discussions are elevated to a veritable art form.
Downside: Less opinion and more content would make for a better mix.
Typical quote: "Russell always held memorable parties, whereas Jarvis's consisted of ten of us, his mum and his amorous dog."
Overall: ★★★

Coming Soon: first for video game news... And about 84th for Web design.

FAR OUT

Name: Astro Zine
What is it? The whole nine yards and 12 signs, for those who feel a kinship with the stars and planets.
Where you'll find it: http://astrology.net/astrozine/index.html
What's it like? Just as naggingly enthusiastic and well-structured as you'd expect from a bunch of astrologers. You can get astrology-based personal advice, access your daily horoscope, discover more about the star signs of the rich and famous, and tap into a whole bunch of other astrological bumph on the Net. There's even a bit on Chinese astrology, in case you thirst for more superstitious nonsense.
Upside: Now you really can get a clearer idea of when Mars will hold sway over your Piscean elliptical waning arse cycle.
Downside: It's astrology and is therefore an unmitigated load of bollocks. Sorry.

The deconstruction of destruction: movie e-zine Images meets *Die Hard*, does theorising.

Typical quote: "I am an Aquarius female married to a Capricorn male... I tend to be a little jealous and possessive of him whereas he is totally narcissistic and always on top of everything... I don't mind, but he's always so business like and I need sentiment. What can I do???? Born: Feb 17, 1964, 03:04 am, Brooklyn."
Overall: ★★★

ON THE GAME

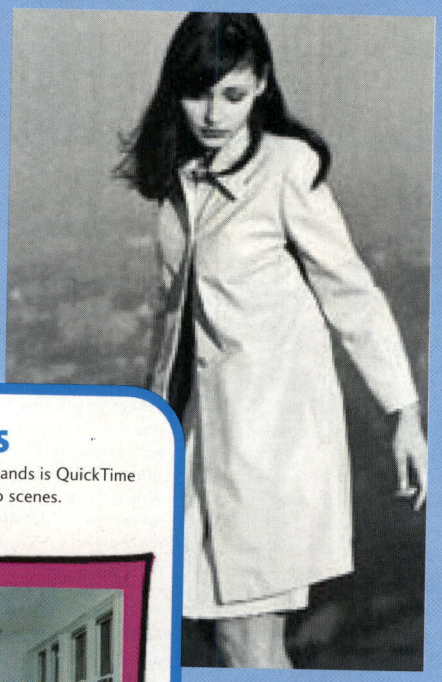
Name: Coming Soon
What is it? A gathering place for screenshots, interviews and info on upcoming computer and video games.
Where you'll find it: http://www.csoon.com
What's it like? Disorderly, lacking in insight, and full of holes. Still, it's stuffed with the latest info and industry news, covers all gaming platforms and provides down-loadable demos. And because it's on-line, it regularly beats the earthbound printed press to the previews, making Coming Soon ideal bookmark fodder for the games fanatic in your life.
Upside: Just what the gaming nation wants but...
Downside: ... it could do with a user-friendly index, bigger screenshots, and a more comprehensive take on the gaming scene.
Typical quote: "ION Storm isn't just playing around. The computer game design powerhouse today announced aggressive plans for their first three titles."
Overall: ★★★

MEATY

Name: The Tripe List
What is it? The cold, cynical voice of truth.
Where you'll find it: http://www.mcs.net/~brentano/tripe/
What's it like? Acerbic, fearless and informed, The Tripe List aims to expose corruption, double dealing and plain old media manipulation. The subjects covered take in the entertainment world, American politics, international news and Net culture. Rather than ranting on and on, each subject's introduced briefly and then linked to press releases and other Web sites. It's an effective

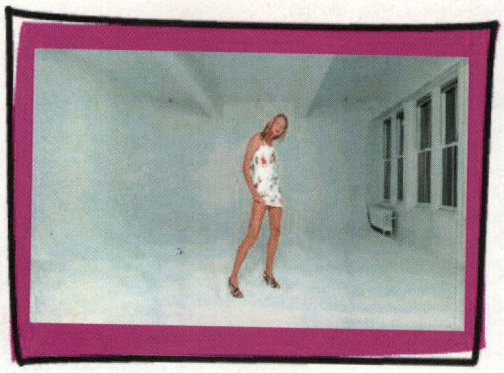
HotSpot!

Name: Hypermode
What is it? A hi-tech, hi-gloss mini-Bible of American style.
Where you'll find it: http://www.hypermode.com
What's it like? Like the *Spice Girls* rolled into one – sporty, sexy, posh and, er, the other two. RealAudio clips, Shockwave snippets, QuickTime VR files and good old-fashioned still images are all thrown into the mix, along with top models, tip-top presentation, and non-Top Shop fashion. There's even a section where you can choose the style you're looking for and the site will spew out possible clothing combinations. The concept doesn't really work, but it's a cute little gimmick.
Upside: The editorial, opinion, lots of clothes, and no sign of Mr Banks and his ubiquitous bobbling. Hypermode is crazily vapid, but wonderfully stylish. Just as it should be.
Downside: You'll probably be missing at least one of the plug-ins required to weave through the various features, which means more down-loading.
Typical quote: "Fashion has always been a complex-adaptive system (whatever that means). And now it's even more so, thanks to Hypermode's Artifice Intelligence technology. Just tell the computer what you want and it puts together an outfit using algorithms more complex than the seating arrangements at Karl Lagerfeld's shows."



THE CAMERA NEVER LIES

One of the coolest plug-ins Hypermode demands is QuickTime VR, which it uses to create 360 degree photo scenes.



1. Take a regular studio scene, with the usual leggy, pouty, swan-necked model in mannequin mode.

2. Slide the mouse sideways and – hey! – you can spin the view right around the room. Don't these two look spookily similar?

3. It's even possible to add a further kind of 3D effect by zooming in to check out the model's skin pore maintenance. If you must.

way of pointing the finger and wagging it enthusiastically before letting the victims hoist themselves by their own petards. Most enjoyable.
Upside: Utterly ruthless in its choice of targets.
Downside: More vitriol to accompany the links wouldn't go amiss.
Typical quote: "The CIA's assurances that Gulf War veterans couldn't have been exposed to nerve gas, followed by the agency's admission that they knew in advance there were chemical weapons in a bunker the army planned to bomb."
Overall: ★★★★

WOMAN TO WOMAN

Name: Shescape
What is it? A lesbian e-zine with style rather than hang-ups.
Where you'll find it: http://www.shescape.com/
What's it like? Cast aside any tawdry preconceptions you might have and prepare yourself for a sassy and stylish treat for your eyeballs. Surprisingly mainstream in its design, Shescape has horoscopes, events listings and agony columns sitting happily beside people's personal accounts of coming out. But then it's arguably naive of anybody to expect anything different. This is an e-zine for people of a certain sexual orientation, not a completely different way of living or thinking. My name's Ben Elton. Goodnight.
Upside: Straight-up lesbian-orientated stuff, without any attempt at hand wringing, justification or militancy.
Downside: It needs more sections, more reader input and more content.
Typical quote: "And you find yourself checking out her ass. But no, you're not a lesbian... Just a little curious!"
Overall: ★★★

PICTURE THIS

Name: Images
What is it? A weekly journal of film and popular culture.
Where you'll find it: http://www.qni.com/~ijournal/
What's it like? Any e-zine capable of intelligently discussing the heroic deconstruction within *Die Hard* must be worth a look. Almost as knowledgeable and comprehensive as the likes of *Empire* and *Premiere*, this is one e-zine with aspirations. The reviews display real insight, movie stills and credits are thoughtfully included, and a wealth of features ensure that Images is far more than another stop-off point before deciding which multiplex movie to munch popcorn through.
Upside: It slams David Cronenberg's *Crash* for its shallowness rather than on moral grounds.
Downside: Some movie clips to accompany the reviews would be nice.
Typical quote: "This is Jim Carrey's finest performance to date and one of the finest comedic performances of the '90s. *Liar Liar* shows there's a fine actor inside of Carrey." Okay, so it's not perfect...
Overall: ★★★★★

ASSWIPE

Name: Circus Beavis
What is it? One man's desperate attempt to come up with something witty.
Where you'll find it: http://users.1st.net/main/circusbeavis.html
What's it like? With a name like Circus Beavis, you might expect this e-zine to be brain-wiltingly unfunny. Be proud of your assumptions and rest safe in the knowledge that it's much, *much* worse than that. This is a brand new Web site, but what with a collection of crap chat-up lines and a list of depressing things (it includes pretty girls, high school English classes and death) as the current on-line highlights, the chances of Circus Beavis ever developing into something less pathetic are fairly remote. Maybe when the author grows up...
Upside: It's a small site.
Downside: It exists.
Typical quote: "Frog: Croak, croak, toast is my fave pardner. Cow: Frog's saying he ain't down wit da powers dat be. Pig: (picking up his uzi): You frosted anal cheese powder puff wimpies! I'll gun ya down!" Just don't ask.
Overall: ★

RINGING THE CHANGES

Name: unGroom'd
What is it? A man's pre-marital guide, would you believe...
Where you'll find it: http://www.ungroomd.com/
What's it like? A frighteningly American concept executed in a scarily humour-free way. unGroom'd claims to NOT be a male version of the usual bridal magazines. If that's the case, why are there articles on gift ideas, budgeting, and how to pop the question? At least the discussions about raising children and exercise are well written. Still, it doesn't make them any more relevant or desirable to your average groom.
Upside: The best in its field...
Downside: Yeah, in a field of one. Crazy Yanks.
Typical quote: "Split level, colonial, brownstone, apartment, condo, trailer park, whatever it is, it's yours. And it's hers, too. Here's how to deal with it."
Overall: ★

Net Radio

TUNED IN, DROPPED OFF: **PETER HILL**
phill@futurenet.co.uk

Hotspot!

Name: PoliceScanner.com
What is it? Eavesdroppers' heaven with a non-stop diet of Yankee cop talk, thanks to the marriage of a scanner and a modem.
Where you'll find it: http://www.policescanner. com
What's it like? Bizarre but utterly compulsive listening. Tune in to the everyday work of the Los Angeles and Dallas police departments and discover the true worth of RealAudio. PoliceScanner connects Web users everywhere to the daily Compton carnival, *sans* flak jacket. The thought that you're listening to real-life crime as it unfolds holds the same kind of fascination as watching *Crime Watch*. If you fancy something a little more communal, there's also a chat room and an interactive talk show will be on-line soon.
Upside: Hear about murder and mayhem as it happens.
Downside: After an hour on-line you could have nothing more than a jaywalker to show for your phone bill.
Typical quote: "We've got a 10-14 in progress, corner of the K-Mart and People's Drive [bang]."

PoliceScanner.com
Broadcast by AudioNet

DOWN AND OUT IN LA

The following is a transcriptof a broadcast to the LA Policescanner.com channel, 10.14am GMT on April 12 1997.

Station: Five-nine come in.
First unit: Five-nine.
Station: We have reports of parties acting suspiciously. Suspects' vehicle is a beige four-door sedan with two hispanics. Suspects were shining flashlights into stationary vehicles.
First unit: Roger.
Second unit: 422 PC, nobody go in there.
First unit: Okay, roger, we'll all go in.
[Silence, then flurry of activity.]
First unit: These guys are hanging out of the vehicle, looking for stereos, looking for personal items.
Second unit: 422 PC on the scene.
Station: Roger.
First unit: Approaching suspects.
Second unit: Approaching suspects.
[Silence.]
Second unit: Suspects have been apprehended. Name, Victor [surname]. 5-ft 10-in, 160lbs. Aged 21. Vehicle is not his own.
Station: Roger... Unit five-seven, we have a 211 in progress...

BEHIND THE TIMES

Name: This is Radio One
What is it? Auntie's monolith goes live.
Where you'll find it: http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/radio1/reception/index.html
What's it like? 99.5FM, on the Web. Although the site makes for enjoyable listening, it's not really of much interest to the domestic visitor. First, you can obtain crystal clear reception through the good, old-fashioned wireless, whereas streaming audio is subject to interference. Second, the Web broadcasts lag about half an hour behind their radio equivalent, so you can never be sure if you're listening to the ninth or tenth play of 'Wannabee' that morning.
Upside: Impress your mate for about five seconds, before switching on the stereo and realising that Lisa I'Anson's no longer on air.
Downside: It's hard not to dismiss the site as half-hearted opportunism. And the lack of a Gary Davies animated GIF is a chance squandered.
Typical quote: "So, Sharon from Eccles, the question is: Thora Hird – dead or alive?"
Overall: ★★★

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?

Name: Internet Radio NEXUS
What is it? Broadcasts from the UN, UNESCO and related organisations.
Where you'll find it: http://www.nexus.org/Internet_Radio
What's it like? Unfortunately, Boutros Boutros Ghali unplugged isn't on the schedule. Instead you get a series of reports and speeches taken from the United Nations playlist and sent via Milan. The excerpts tend to focus on special events such as the organisation's 50th anniversary and World Freedom Press Day, trouble spots such as former Yugoslavia and various environmental projects. It's worthy, but seldom scintillating.
Upside: Gives you the chance to feel like a global player.
Downside: Due to lack of funding the site's irregularly updated, and broadcasts are only available in French and English. What about the rest of the nations?
Typical quote: "No other institution in history has gathered together so many political communities, and no other has survived so many storms." Hear, hear...
Overall: ★★★

Ladies and gentlemen: the winner of this issue's Most Boring Picture goes to...

FLORIDA SUNSHINE

Name: 1 Web Radio
What is it? A directory of American radio stations and Net-specific shows still under development.
Where you'll find it: http://1webradio.com/radio.htm
What's it like? A bringing together of talk shows, educational shows and music, all originating from Southern Florida. Only five of a potential 20 channels are currently occupied, but hopefully that will change soon. The content centres on local events and bands, evoking images of *Spinal Tap* when heavy metal outfit *Oliver Klossoff* takes to the air: "How much more blacker could this Webcast be?" 1 Web Radio takes the time to provide a few handy pointers to the Internet, with some funky college boy riffs to boot.
Upside: Diverse content on an easy-to-use site.
Downside: The Humane Society of Broward County presents "Dogs and Cats Training Tips" was unavailable.
Typical quote: "Yeah, we've been together six months now and, by the way, we're doing this interview with our clothes off."
Overall: ★

SMALL TALK

Name: Ann On-line
What is it? From Bill Gates to on-line erotica, Ann Devlin gives hot media topics a quick once over.
Where you'll find it: http://www.annonline.com/
What's it like? Oprah with JPEGs. Ann discusses sex therapy, comet Hale-Bopp and talks with the author of *Chicken Soup For The Soul*. The site's initially interesting, but soon turns to ear-candy as the interviews generate little of substance. Nevertheless, a new subject's covered every day, while the design and concept shows a progressive attitude towards Web Radio.
Upside: Makes good use of hypertext and delivers crystal-clear broadcasts.
Downside: Most of the interviewees are plugging their new books.
Typical quote: "How refreshing to find a book that deals with everything from aphrodisiacs to sexual fantasies. Now tell me..."
Overall: ★★

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Web Games

POINTS FOR CLICKS: **GARRICK WEBSTER**
gwebster@futurenet.co.uk

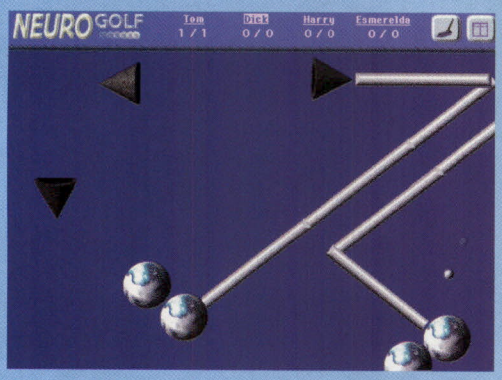
RETURN OF THE PAC

Name: Pac-Muncher
What is it? Yeeees, it's a Pac Man applet.
Where you'll find it: http://www.magnastar.com/games/gobbler/
What's it like? Poor old Pac Man, he's been around the block a few times. Great in his heyday, when takings dipped he resorted to wearing a pink bonnet and masquerading as Mrs Pac Man in an attempt to impress juveniles in grotty, backstreet arcades. With the cross-dressing days behind him and after a period of intense rehab, this gaming dinosaur returns as a slow and rickety applet. Where can a good game go to die?
Upside: You might catch some movement. If you're lucky.
Downside: The ghosts aren't the right shape and it's just not the same without the "waka-waka" sound effects.
Typical quote: "The ghost movements are random, so it may take a while for them to find their home and come back to life after they're killed. Arrow keys do not work on some computers. Use I, J, L and M." Fascinating stuff.
Overall: ★★

Mr Mole with an immensely slappable face. You with a mallet. Give you three guesses as to what happens next...

HotSpot!

Name: NeuroGolf
What is it? A Shockwave game based on that traditional Scottish sport where you smack a small white ball around a well-groomed field and try to make it land in a hole marked by a brightly coloured flag. That's right! It's lawn snooker!
Where you'll find it: http://www.neurotec.com/demos/shockwav/neurogolf.html
What's it like? It ain't really all that "neuro", but this is one of the better Web games out there. You control shots with your mouse and the holes get progressively harder, featuring more obstacles as you go along. The sounds are even synchronised with the action. Well, almost.
Upside: It works well, there are seven courses to choose from, and you can even design your own hole.
Downside: It's prone to glitches. A badly-timed click can send the ball pinging off in any direction and sometimes it takes ages for the ball to stop rolling.
Typical quote: "NeuroGolf is a twisted combination of miniature golf, pool and pinball. Not surprisingly, the object is to hit the ball into the hole in as few strokes as possible."

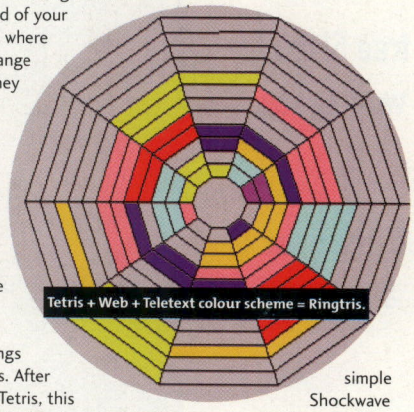


DIE, INSECTOID SCUM

Name: X-3 DFN/DR
What is it? A graphically-heavy Defender-style applet game.
Where you'll find it: http://www.vr1.com/comics/megabot/issue12/jpg2.html
What's it like? Defender was a fast-action arcade original; X-3 DFN/DR is a silly slow-to-figure acronym. Admittedly, it looks impressive with explosions, "shawoop" warp noises and even voice samples – "Don't leave me," implore the humans you're meant to rescue. But at ten frames a second or less, X-3 DFN/DR is the most unwieldy game since underwater Kabudi. What a let down.
Upside: Quality graphics, good sounds and it's *nearly* playable with Netscape 3.
Downside: Which means that it is, in fact, unplayable.
Typical quote: "After the battle with Kruel's horde of Chaos Drones (Last Episode), the MegaBotic X-3 fleet was all but obliterated. As the last of the X-3s sped away, J'Kir solemnly vowed that he would not allow the death of another MegaBot at the hands of his ancient enemy, King Kruel... Even if it cost him his life."
Overall: ★

SWING THAT RING

Name: Ringtris
What is it? A Tetris-alike Java applet.
Where you'll find it: http://www.webcom.com/~wutka/Ringtris.html
What's it like? As Web games go, Ringtris is fast enough to be playable. Instead of your standard Tetris, where you have to arrange the blocks as they hurtle towards the bottom of the screen, the play area is circular and the blocks are sucked in towards the middle. To make the blocks disappear, you need to form rings rather than rows. After playing normal Tetris, this takes a bit of adjusting to.
Upside: Ringtris down-loads fast and, unlike most Java games, threatens to be addictive.
Downside: Looks grey. Feels grey. And does Tetrisland really need another visit?
Typical quote: "Ringtris – Yet Another Tetris Variation."
Overall: ★★★

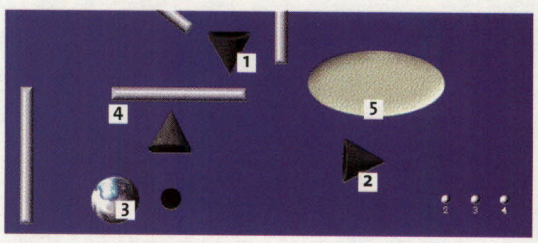

Tetris + Web + Teletext colour scheme = Ringtris.

RODENT, I SMITE THEE

Name: Whack-a-Mole
What is it? Thump mammals with a mallet.
Where you'll find it: http://www.mindframe.com/tools/shockwave/game.html
What's it like? Puerile but fun. A fast, frenetic and satisfyingly simple Shockwave game, there are three holes from which a mole can appear. You just have to line up your mallet with their craniums and bash 'em whenever their heads pop up. If three moles get away it's game over. There's even a high score sheet, so if you're deranged enough to splat over 100 moles in a session, the entire Web will know about it.
Upside: Great for a bit of stress-busting action.
Downside: You'll tire of the theme rather quickly.
Typical quote: "The rewards in Whack-a-Mole are even more ethereal than winning worthless junk that you'll rediscover under your bed when you're 29 — Personal Satisfaction."
Overall: ★★★

DESIGN YOUR OWN GREEN

What pushes NeuroGolf to the top of the leaderboard this issue is that it actually gives you the opportunity to design your own minigolf course on-line and then play it. Presented with an empty green, all you have to do is pick an entry (**1**) and exit (**2**) point for your ball, drag and drop your own circular (**3**) or straight barriers (**4**) and bung in some sand pits (**5**) for good measure. Then click "Test" and you can play your newly-created golfing challenge. Even pro course designer Jack Nicklaus never had it this easy...



Web Fiction

CYBERSCRIBE: **ROBIN ASKEW**
Robin_Askew@msn.com

HotSpot

WHADDAYA MEAN, "SLASH FICTION"?

Dating back to the birth of *Star Trek* mania in the '70s, "slash" refers to the convention of using a slash to signify an imagined sexual relationship between two TV characters. At first these were mainly homosexual set-ups, but the term now covers any sexual permutation involving men, women, beasts, aliens... This is an excerpt from 'So It Comes To This' by Shannon Alayna. Scully is wrestling with Mulder's undergarments...

"Lightly raking my fingers over his shoulders, I felt him shudder in anticipation and I wanted him so badly, wanted to feel him pushing inside of me, ravaging me in such a primitive, bestial way that I would have no choice but to succumb to his every desire and chase away the torments of before. That excited me; his power, his controlled rage beating within his lean runner's body. I needed to feel it. I whimpered slightly and he looked at me. Proudly, I met his gaze and pressed the heel of my hand firmly against the hardened length of him, feeling the taunt muscle through the material of his pants. It elicited a moan from him and I delighted at the sound. I grabbed for his belt..."

...xiation: The X-Files Erotica Archive

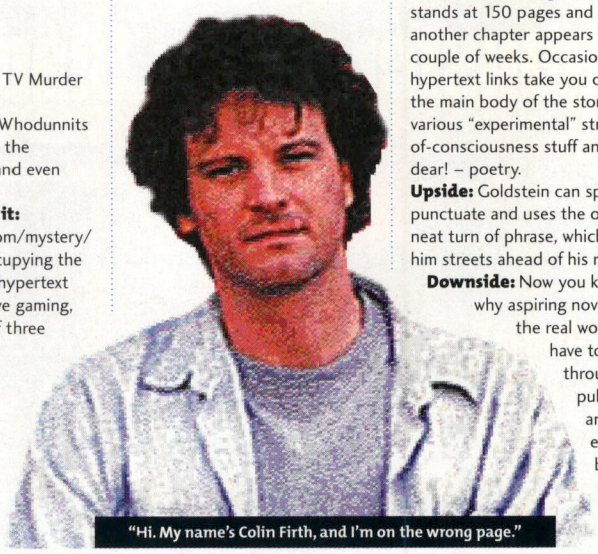
What is it? Slash fiction featuring Mulder and Scully engaged in close encounters of the pervy kind.
Where you'll find it: http://www.nycmetro.com/Bobbi/main.html
What's it like? Most of us watch sci-fi telly programmes to get involved in the story lines and root for the humanoid heroes against the icky alien folk. But there's always someone out there who's thinking, "Wouldn't it be great if all these people were shagging instead?". Whereas *Star Trek* slash fiction seems to inspire those who yearn for hot 'n' horny Kirk-on-Spock homo action, *The X-Files* has a vast lesbian following, which is reflected in several of the many fan stories collected here. One yarn has Scully copping off with sapphic crooner Melissa Etheridge... The quality is variable, with many a writer so keen to get down to the rumpy-pumpy that they neglect such niceties as plot, grammar and taste.
Upside: It's anti-consumerism in action: why let some multinational corporation dictate how your fave characters behave when you can write your own stories?
Downside: Unlike the real *X-Files*, you know *exactly* what's going to happen at the end.
Typical quote: "If you're looking for good ole smut about everyone's favourite show, you've come to the right place..."

PRATTLE OF THE BULGE

Name: Katie Puckrick's Erotic Novel
What is it? A dirty novel written by Katie Puckrick and thousands of women's magazine readers.
Where you'll find it: http://www.erack.com/nwoman/
What's it like? An ever-evolving tale of vigorous concupiscence. Ms Puckrick contributed the opening chapter, which sees recently dumped Treena hanging out at the Lemon Frog Club with her pal Christina in search of some "new boy talent". The best she can find is the mildly sexy bartender, which leads to an embarrassing scene in the ladies' loo. Choosing from three "what happens next?" options, *New Woman* readers can vote on the next instalment by e-mail, which in turn ends with three options. And so the tale develops and branches out...
Upside: Anyone who thinks women don't enjoy tales of hardcore sex really ought to check this out.
Downside: It's just one manly bulge and moistened undergarment after another.
Typical quote: "One of her hands found its way into his lap, and Treena was gratified to find the bulge straining at the thin cloth of his trousers."
Overall: ★★★★

MURDER, SHE E-MAILED

Name: Now TV Murder Mysteries
What is it? Whodunnits in which you choose the dialogue, locations and even shape the outcome.
Where you'll find it: http://www.nowtv.com/mystery/
What's it like? Occupying the borderline between hypertext fiction and interactive gaming, you have a choice of three murder mysteries to take part in. Set up almost like a multiple choice, you move from location to location, conversing with different characters in the story until you solve the mystery. In 'The Dead Client', for example, you're cast as Tracy Darrington PI. Your client asks you to solve his own murder and promptly dies, leaving you to traipse off and interrogate all the subjects Miss Marple fashion.
Upside: Entertaining blood spots appear all over your screen when the client gets iced.
Downside: A basic set-up with a menu-driven format means you have only a limited choice in how the story progresses.
Typical quote: "I want you to investigate a murder. Here's $5,000." Oh, twist my arm...
Overall: ★★★


"Hi. My name's Colin Firth, and I'm on the wrong page."

VERY DEEP BREATH

Name: The Lung Prophet
What is it? A novel by one Harry Goldstein.
Where you'll find it: http://www.echonyc.com/~harry/
What's it like? Mr Goldstein's inspiration evidently lies in the Beat generation and hard-boiled noir fiction. This mammoth on-line undertaking currently stands at 150 pages and another chapter appears every couple of weeks. Occasional hypertext links take you outside the main body of the story to various "experimental" stream-of-consciousness stuff and – oh dear! – poetry.
Upside: Goldstein can spell, punctuate and uses the odd neat turn of phrase, which puts him streets ahead of his rivals.
Downside: Now you know why aspiring novelists in the real world have to go through publishers and editors before they're unleashed on the public.
Typical quote: "After a pack and a half of Chesterfield Kings, three Cokes, two joints, a bag of Doritoes, four Twinkies and one messy orgasm, Karl found himself walking back and forth between the bathroom and the TV, alternately considering his reflection, making monkey faces or trying to seduce himself..."
Overall: ★★★

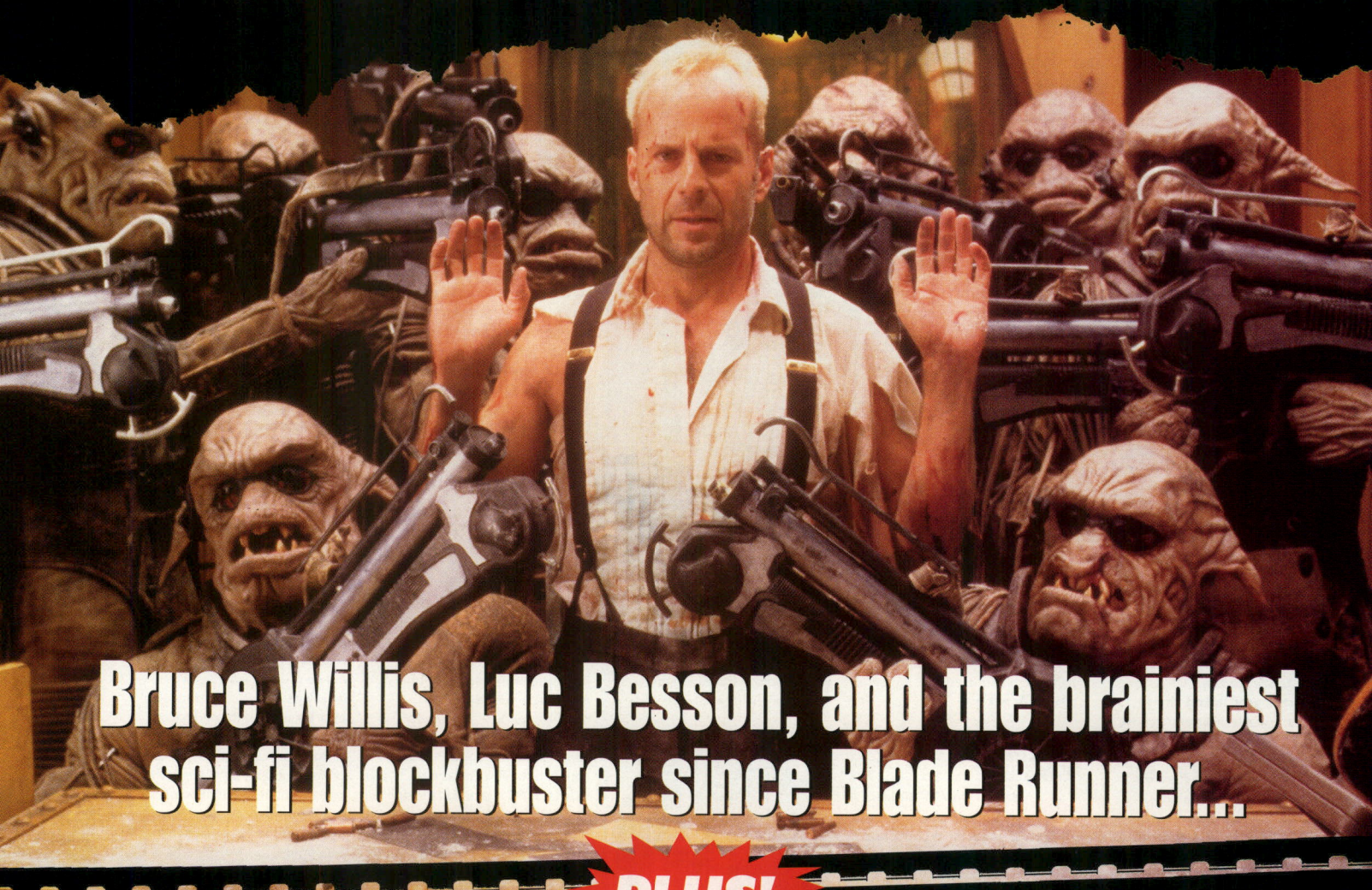
BEYOND BELIEF

Name: Mission Status: Space – Above And Beyond
What is it? A fantasy script for the cult TV show.
Where you'll find it: http://www.microserve.net/space:aab/serial/
What's it like? What would you do if your favourite TV series was cancelled by those uncaring network bastards just because nobody was watching it? You'd set up an e-mail forum to bash out your own interactive script, wouldn't you? *Wouldn't you?* This 60-page effort was created by the Space Fiction Guild And Oreo Worshipping Society and features heaps of gung-ho action, explosions and the kind of swearing that would probably happen in real life but doesn't get into Fox TV shows.
Upside: It's like a proper script, with directions and everything.
Downside: Don't expect to understand any of it unless you were glued to the original series.
Typical quote: "Paul runs towards the Bofors 30mm depleted uranium cannon. He grabs the manual butterfly trigger and begins firing on the incoming chig fighters."
Overall: ★★★

COMING SOON IN

TOTAL FILM

THE FIFTH ELEMENT



Bruce Willis, Luc Besson, and the brainiest sci-fi blockbuster since Blade Runner...

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Con Air: this year's all-action answer to *The Rock*.
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Web Chat

PRETENDING TO BE A GIRL: **PETER HILL**
phill@futurenet.co.uk

LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF

Name: British Chat
What is it? Sparkling repartee, Blighty style.
Where you'll find it: http://wbs.net/webchat3.so?cmd=cmd_doorway:British_Chat
What's it like? The title is a little misleading, as this is about as British as mom's apple pie and Twinkies. Most of the conversation you'll find here has little to do with the motherland and a lot to do with people eating bandwidth with inanity. Also highly irritating, the page doesn't random refresh and takes a while to update, making for slow and disjointed exchanges. The registration system is equally cumbersome and may account for people getting bored and visiting a free, instant-access site instead.
Upside: Indulge in some stream-of-consciousness drivel.
Downside: You have to put up with everyone else's crap too.
Typical quote: "Icebear: I come from Australia, home of bad TV programs and gutless politicians! (Oh, that probably describes most countries.)"
Overall: ★★

UTAH SAINTS

Name: Mormon Chat
What is it? A forum for Utah polygamists and their pals.
Where you'll find it: http://www.hprf.odu.edu/cgi-bin/religionchat.pl
What's it like? It's a fascinating concept, but the lifeless white background and intermittent responses aren't exactly enticing. Still, the pages are refreshed automatically, which at least gives the impression of vibrant debate. Although you'd expect Mormons' conversation to be of a Godly nature, any Jesus-related chat was swiftly abandoned at the arrival of a user named "Girlie". Hey, even the most devout man is tempted by the promise of a no-trace conversation in a private room. Things got reassuringly back to normal when Girlie revealed that she was the tender age of 14.
Upside: It's nice to meet a Mormon without looking them in the eye.
Downside: The temptation to mention Joyce McKinney and thus show your age.
Typical quote: "Bill: Time to go Na Na everyone. Co: Bill you are asshole. Bill: What? Jesuit: Greetings sinners. Di: How do you know I'm a sinner? Jesuit: I guessed." See, even Mormons indulge in childish repartee...
Overall: ★★★

"Hilarious chat channel" The Jonesie Show. This week's topic: The Importance Of Dignity.

KILLJOY WAS 'ERE

Name: The Kidsnet Graffiti Wall
What is it? *Party Of Five* through a modem.
Where you'll find it: http://www.kidscom.com/newkc/teenswall.html
What's it like? A meeting place for troubled adolescents of 12 and above – younger kids have a separate wall. The users tend to adopt post-CB handles like Surf Goddess, Love Potion and No Fear, while the subjects are predictable enough but entertaining. Broken hearts, coy chat-ups and distant apologies are the usual fare, though the discourse occasionally gets candid. You can even configure the fonts, so prepare your eyes for an onslaught of 72-point neon. The only drawback is the registration, where they demand everything bar a blood sample.
Upside: It's moderated, which means parents can confidently let their kids loose.
Downside: It's an excessively commercial concern.
Typical quote: "Since we met last time, she does say 'hey', but she don't look at me. I'm getting discouraged. I actually want to move on, that's why I got involved with that psycho girl, but well, I still feel something for this gal I really like."
Overall: ★★★★

HARE TODAY

Name: The Jonesie Show
What is it? An on-line chat show from Compuserve.
Where you'll find it: http://www.compuserve.co.uk/jonesie/
What's it like? A chat channel with a difference. Showing every weeknight and accessible to Compuserve users, the chat show is hosted by Jonesie and her belligerent butler, Bentley. The idea is that they pick the topic of discourse and anyone logging on can chip in with their tuppenceworth. Everyone can access the Web site and survey the "hilarious consequences" of these chats, filed under titles like 'Conspiring To Have A Good Time' and 'Royal Goodbyes'. The results are seldom side-splitting, but then again, *Last Of The Summer Wine* is one of the longest-running comedy series of all time. Enough said.
Upside: A nicely designed site.
Downside: Only Compuserve users can join in on the fun.
Typical quote: "Cinder Jonesie: This is the Official CompuServe Pantomime. Cinderella: Please get in costume! BallisticBunny: Got any part for a bunny?"
Overall: ★★★

HotSpot!

MR. SHOWBIZ

VICE OF STARWAVE

Name: The Water Cooler
What is it? A daily poll on showbiz issues.
Where you'll find it: http://www.mrshowbiz.com:80/dailydose/watercooler/archive/
What's it like? Coming from the brilliant Mr Showbiz site, you get to vote on various entertainment-related issues and even submit your own poll ideas. This results in probing questions such as "Should Wynona keep on puffin'?" and "Should Gillian Anderson be paid as much as David Duchovny?" being put to the Net populace at large. It's a lot of fun, if only to watch, Peter-Snow style, as the percentages change throughout the day. The only drawback is that the topics are rarely geared towards Europe. Never mind – once you've voted, just go and trawl the vast Mr Showbiz archive and see why it's one of the best sites on the Net.
Upside: Swing the vote – multiple voting is a doddle!
Downside: Interaction is limited to checking a box.
Typical quote: "James Cameron's *Titanic* has a budget approaching $200 million, and it may go higher... Vote: Yes – boat go boom or no – they're on PCP."

CHOOSE YOUR CHEESE

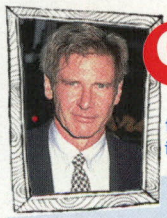
Want to register your vote or just find out what the Internet thinks? The Mr Showbiz Water Cooler comes up with a different question every day. Just choose from a selection of possible answers and look out for the final percentages.

Q Jerry Seinfeld and steady Shoshanna Lonstein have broken up. Before he gets depressed and unfunny, find him a Hollywood gal with the appropriate rank and nubility.

Results
Alicia Silverstone: 496 votes.
Liv Tyler: 415 votes.
Claire Danes: 332 votes.
Total votes cast: 1,243

Q Hercules and Xena, in a well-lit, well-greased pit. Only one comes out alive. Who is it?

Results
Xena. Ladies first: 763 votes.
Hercules. He's like, a demigod. Duh!: 623 votes.
Total votes cast: 1,385



Q You've done it before, now do it again. Each of these men has played or will play the President of the United States in a feature film. Which thespian would you vote into office for real?

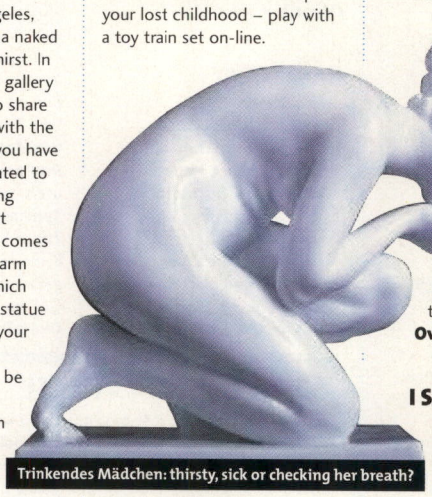
Results
Harrison Ford: 1,608 votes
Sidney Poitier: 640 votes.
Bill Pullman: 264 votes.
Gene Hackman: 225 votes.
Jack Nicholson: 243 votes.
Total votes cast: 2,980

Net Gadgets

ALL GIZMO'D UP: **PAUL ROSE**
MrBiffo@aol.com

DAS PUKENDES MÄDCHEN

Name: The Drinking Maiden
What is it? A telerobotic view of a 29-inch high marble statue.
Where you'll find it: http://digimuse.usc.edu/maiden/Introduction1.html
What's it like? Somewhere in an art gallery in Los Angeles, there's a small statue of a naked woman quenching her thirst. In a public kinda spirit, the gallery curators have decided to share her translucent beauty with the rest of the world. Here you have an on-line shrine, dedicated to showing you The Drinking Maiden from 12 different angles. The interactivity comes in the form of a robotic arm attached to a camera, which you can use to view the statue "live" from the angle of your choice. Is this strictly necessary? Will your life be impaired if you don't gaze upon this maiden in particular? Buy a book. Go to an art gallery. Hell, *make* your own statue. Admittedly, it's not a bad site. The work's by a German geezer called Ernst Wenck, who sculpted it in 1901, and there are some paintings and prints you can ogle at too.
Upside: It's a nice sculpture...
Downside: But she looks like she's just vomited into her hand.
Typical quote: "Actually, we knew very little about the Trinkendes Mädchen, except that the statue is pretty obscure and mysterious"
Overall: ★★★


Trinkendes Mädchen: thirsty, sick or checking her breath?

PSSH-TY COOF, PSSH-TY COOF, PSSH-TY...

Name: The Interactive Model Railway
What is it? Make up for your lost childhood – play with a toy train set on-line.
Where you'll find it: http://rr-vs.informatik.uni-ulm.de/RR/gui2/
What's it like? The legendary Interactive Model Railway has recently been updated. Now playing with this remote train is even easier and twice as fun. It's fairly basic: you issue instructions to a pair of trains, telling them which platform you wish them to visit next. You then watch them speed around the track, seemingly oblivious to your orders for them to stop. It isn't likely to replace the huge model railway you keep in the loft alongside those well-thumbed copies of *Razzle*, but it's an amusing diversion nonetheless. For about a minute. For further entertainment, see the comments other visitors to the site have made.
Upside: It's a fun idea.
Downside: You can't be *really* childish and make them crash.
Typical quote: "Your trains aren't working. Fix them or die."
Overall: ★★

I SAY, I SAY, I SAY...

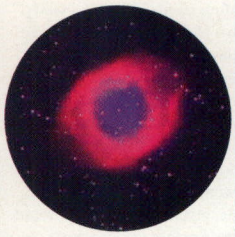
Name: Xavier The Robot
What is it? An R2D2-style robot that you can control.
Where you'll find it: http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs/misc/mosaic/common/omega/Web/Groups/xavier/www/xavier.html
What's it like? Despite the peculiar feeling of detachment, controlling Xavier is quite fun. Tell the little tyke to visit any of several rooms in his wing at the university where he lives. Once Xavier arrives at his destination, instruct him to take a photo or tell a knock-knock joke. Xavier's "parents" even encourage you to teach him new jokes.
Upside: You can teach the robot lots of naff gags.
Downside: How many jokes can you think of with "Xavier" in the punch line?
Typical quote: "Knock knock. Who's there? Xavier. Xavier who? Zave yer time. I'll run that errand." Ho. Ho.
Overall: ★★★

LICENCE TO SWEAR

Name: The Netscape Engineering Sign
What is it? A large LED sign that lives above the heads of the Netscape engineers.
Where you'll find it: http://home.netscape.com/people/mtoy/sign/
What's it like? There's nothing to recommend the Netscape sign. It's pointless. And yet strangely addictive. Why? Because you know the sign's real. Because you can see the messages you type appearing on it. And because all the people working near that sign will gaze upon your words of wit and wisdom... Rarely, however, is it more compelling than when you're competing with another user to get your message up in place of his or hers. Oh, Netscape Sign, how I love thee.
Upside: Write what you want!
Downside: Those Netscape engineers must get really bored of foul-mouthed morons and Bible bashers.
Typical quote: "Dan was here."
Overall: ★★★★

STARS IN YOUR EYES

In case you thought astronomers were atypical dullards, the gents at the Bradford Robotic Telescope are determined to prove you wrong. One large slice of the site has been given over to Telescope Humour. Here are some of the, er, best examples. Prepare to snap a rib with laughter. Maybe.



Q: Why is the moon full once a month?
A: Because it doesn't get fed very often.

You can watch the Sun twice – once with your left eye, once with your right.

Q. Why do physicists continually debunk time travel?
A. Because they're all convinced that their descendants will come back and GET THEM!

Canis Major and Canis Minor were doing some back yard telescope observation. Canis Major suddenly looked away from the telescope and complained, "I have to stop. My eye is bothering me." Canis Minor replied, "Are you Sirius?"

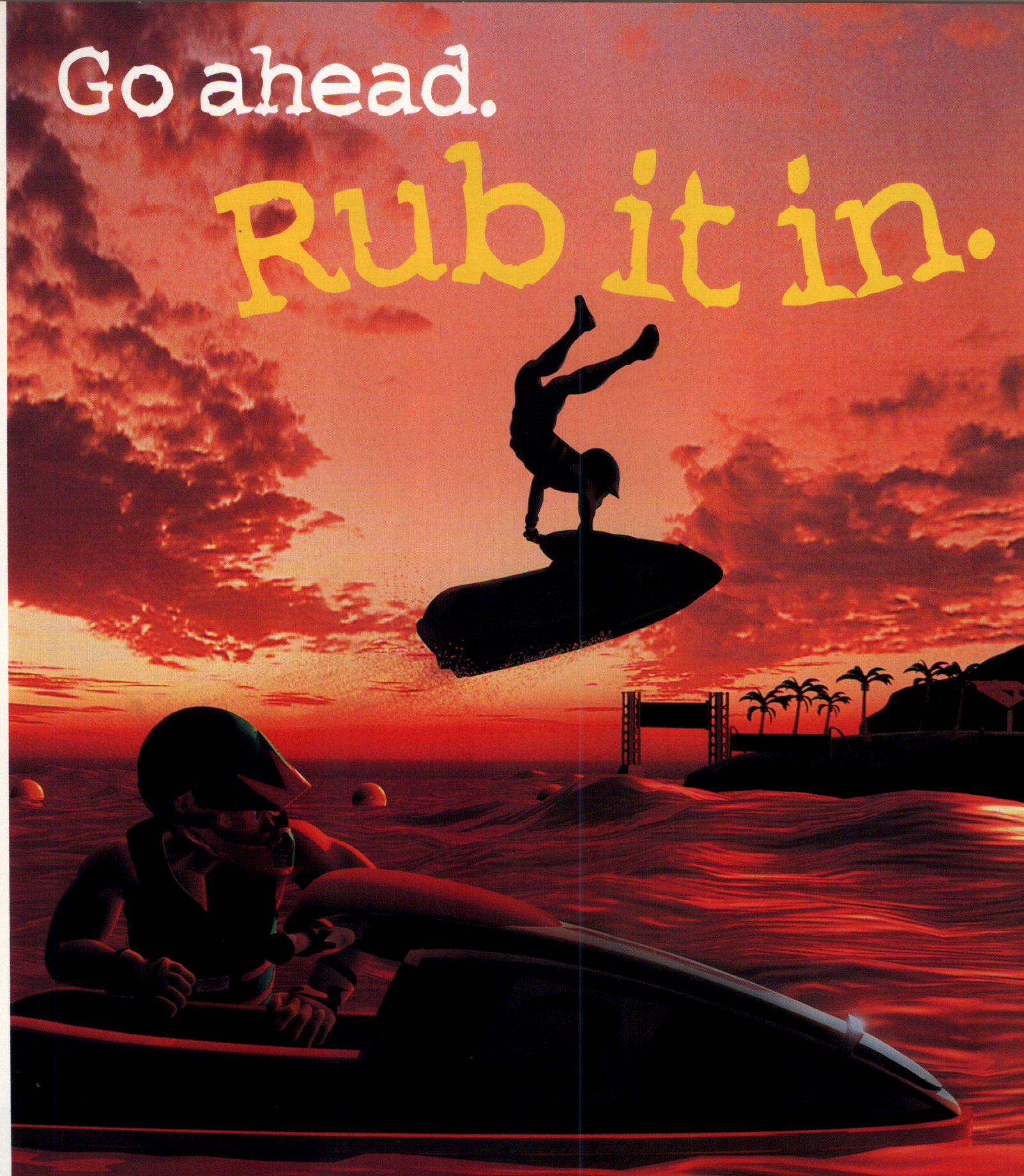
Q: How many astronomers does it take to change a light bulb?
A: What light bulb?

HotSpot!

Name: Bradford Robotic Telescope
What is it? A real telescope that obeys your *every* command.
Where you'll find it: http://www.telescope.org/
What's it like? Man's fascination with the stars began a long time ago. From building a rudimentary pair of wings out of candle wax and feathers (and subsequently flying too close to the sun – doh!) to the Hubble telescope fiasco, man *really* wants to know what those shiny things up there are. Should you lack access to either wax, feathers or the Hubble telescope, Bradford's Robotic Telescope is ideal. You tell it what you want to see, and eventually it gets round to pointing at it. The piccies are displayed on-line for other visitors to ogle. Despite the warning that planets aren't very interesting to look at, the majority of visitors perhaps inevitably request steamy close-ups of Mars and co. The moon, however, looks lovely.
Upside: Travel the universe "from the comfort of your keyboard" etc etc.
Downside: Admit it, astronomy is a tad tedious.
Typical quote: "Looking at single bright stars is often dull."

Go ahead.

Rub it in.



As you thrash the wetsuits off everyone in the water, it's hard not to show off. Wave Race 64 puts you at the throttle of a 3-D soakfest with all the advantages of 64 bit technology under your thumb. Like a revolutionary analogue controller for full-motion 360° movement. So you can jump breakwaters and dive with the dolphins. Corkscrew out of the surf and cut a tighter line through the running tide. Even line up for two player split-screen against your mates. And with nine courses and four degrees of difficulty, there are literally thousands of ways to race your adrenaline. So. Are you wet yet?

WAVE RACE 64

NINTENDO 64

Get into it.

Available exclusively for N64. N-Cube, TM and ® are trademarks of Nintendo Co.,Ltd © 1996 Nintendo Co.,Ltd. Console £249.99, Gamepak £54.99 RRP.

Bizarre

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Bullshit... or not?

Images taken from the weird side of the Web. Fake or fact? YOU DECIDE!

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CONSPIRACY OF THE MONTH

Photographic proof that the Hale Bopp comet signals the coming of the apocalypse withheld by the Pope.

http://www.conspire.com/curren29.html

Dave Green

The Western world's most popular movie of all time is stuffed with Satanic subliminal messages? You *sure* about that? Meet the Net nuts who mix sci-fi with sacrilege...

Evil can take many forms: the torture of innocents; the horror of ethnic cleansing; the potential for limitless cruelty and violence that seems to exist within us all. Yet few would expect to find it lurking at the heart of one of the best-loved movie series of all time, George Lucas's mega-grossing *Star Wars* trilogy. Unless, that is, they'd read the hilarious yet convincing, writ-defying exposé, The Force = Satan Home Page **(http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/4206/).**

It's obviously a joke. Or is it? Using exactly the same insidiously persuasive terminology and rubbish Sunday school clip-art favoured by genuine religious evangelists (check out Jack Chick Comics – **http://www.stim.com/Stim-x/8.2/Chick6/chick6.html),** the authors, Luke and Mortimer, construct an all too believable discourse. They argue that, by describing the Force as the thing within all living creatures ("But isn't that what GOD is?"), George Lucas "is telling us Christians that God isn't good enough and wants us to believe in a higher, secular human force. Tell that to Jesus, George!"

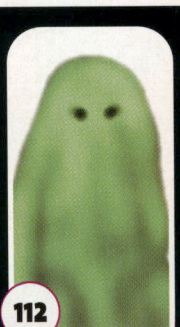
"George Lucas is telling us Christians that God isn't good enough and wants us to believe in a higher, secular human force. Tell that to Jesus, George!"

The main text continues in a similar vein: "R2-D2 is the mute false god Baal who children are told is 'cool'. Is it so cool when God strikes you down where you stand? I don't think so!" Click on the Jesus icon and there's a Q&A session apparently held outside a cinema queue: "Q. It says on your pamphlet that the Force is the tool of Satan. But it also says Jesus is the Force. Doesn't that mean that Jesus is a tool of Satan? Luke: No. Jesus is the Lord. That might seem like a contradiction to you... Mortimer: There are a lot of things that seem like contradictions in religion, but this isn't one of them. Q: Isn't Jesus just like the Force? See, the Force is in everything and so is Jesus! Luke: No they aren't. *Star Wars* is just a movie. The Force is a fantasy. Jesus is reality."

The genius of the page is that it never gives itself away with an obvious gag. I don't know if that really is a quote from Revelations ("And when he has opened the seventh seal, there will be silence in heaven about the space of half an hour"), but it sure as hell sounds like one, complete with a twisted and threatening interpretation: "That seventh seal is the seventh SEQUEL to *Star Wars!* That sequel will enrage the Lord, and He shall SMITE those who worship the Force." The only solid clue lies in the final punch line: "Mortimer and Luke Fontaine work in the fashion industry and hold degrees from Oral Roberts University."

Yes, it almost certainly is a spoof, but sufficiently well executed to really make you wonder – especially if, like me, you first look at it with all the graphics switched off. Sadly, the clumsily modified images of Princess Leia, Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader and Yoda – captioned "Whore", "Satan", "Who is the real Lord?" and "Is this your GOD???" – do tend to give the game away. But that's it. No frames, no Java, no Shockwave, no desperate attempts to sell advertising space – just two pages from two guys you've never heard of, with no telltale links to anything else they've done. It makes those jokers responsible for lame Web sites such as News Satirists **(http://www.fauxhall.com/newsSatirists/)** look like the pathetic losers they are. The Force=Satan. One day all Web pages will be made this way.

110 Mad Science



112 Ghosts

113 Tasteless

114 NET HECKLER'S WEB CRIMES

YER ICONS AND YER RATINGS

Web site

Newsgroup

Hotspot!

The must-see site of the month

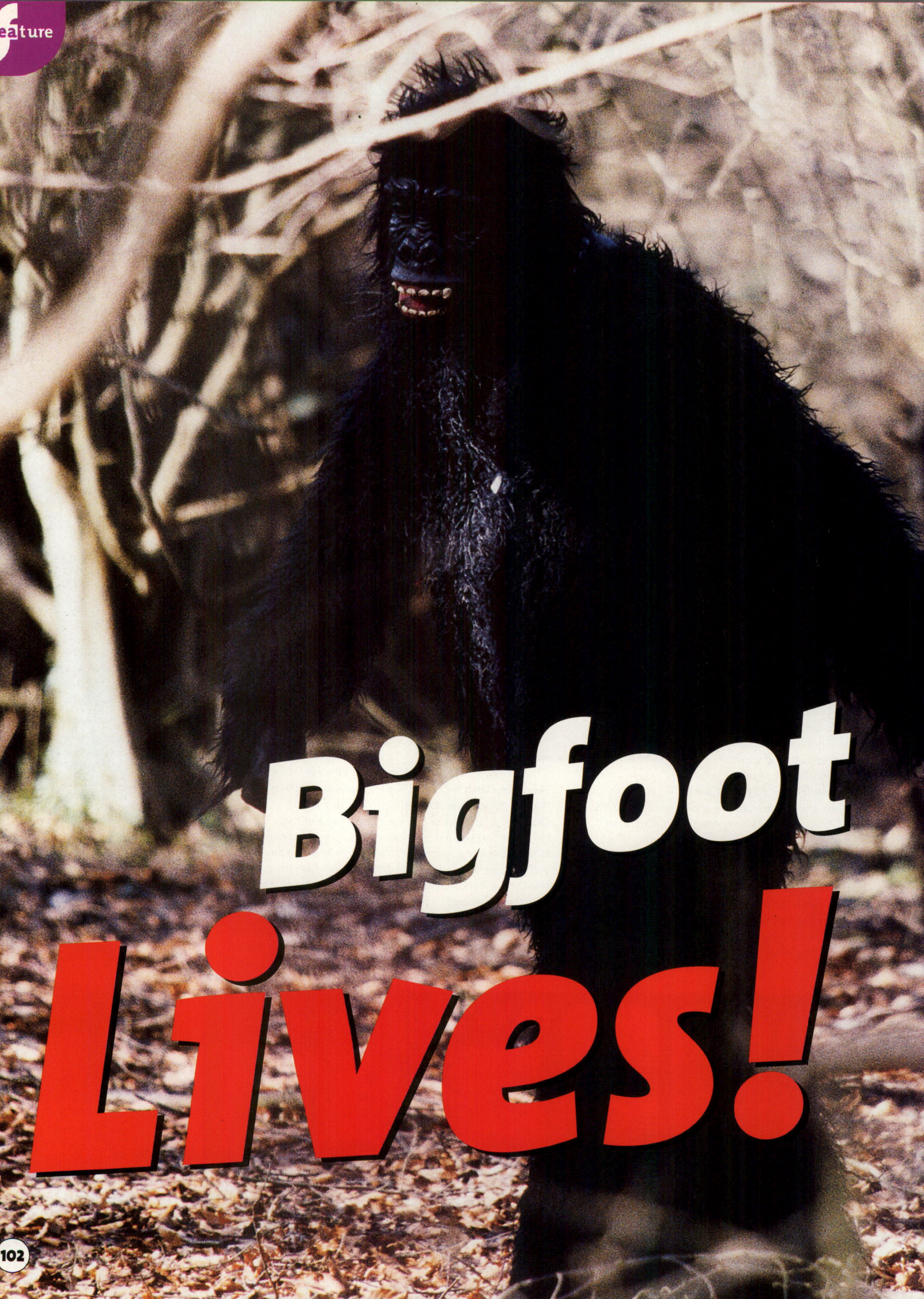
★★★★★ Near Net perfection

★★★★ Well worth a click

★★★ Above average

★★ Mostly mediocre

★ Cyberplop, frankly



Bigfoot Lives!

Hiding somewhere in the depths of the World's Wildest Web is the world's wildest beastoid legend. Man-made myth or time trapped troglodyte? Gil Gillespie stumbles through a swamp of sites in search of the ultimate missing link.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE: **SIMON DODD**

October 20th 1967, 1.30pm. Roger Patterson and his friend Robert Gimlin are out horse riding in Bluff Creek, California. Suddenly something startles their mounts. Patterson looks up and sees a huge hirsute creature loitering without intent on the edge of the forest. He whips out his Kodak movie camera and runs towards the beast shooting 24-feet of colour footage before said hairball sees the camera, puffs his cheeks and hotfoots it back into the bush. And so began the Bigfoot phenomenon as we know it.

Admittedly, fierce woodland monoliths have existed for centuries. Australia hosts The Yowie, Siberia The Minnesota Ice Man and Britain has, um, the otter. But Patterson's film remains the only "real" evidence of a beast who's said to be as tall as Micheal Jordan, as heavy as Geoff Capes and is the owner of feet the size of two sleeping Ronnie Corbetts.

It is, of course, no surprise to find seven feet of wildly careless beard growth being searched for, analysed and discussed all over the Internet. Type the "B" word into a search engine and you'll find all manner of incredible hulkage towering over your screen. But the Bigfoot? Are you *sure?* Wasn't that a mid '70s thing like *The Man From Atlantis?* Surely it was debunked when Harry met the Hendersons? Apparently not.

It is, of course no real surprise to find seven feet of wildly careless beard growth being searched for, analysed and discussed all over the Internet.

The animal or man or man-made myth that goes by the name of Bigfoot, Yeti, Yowie, Sasquatch or "that gippo in the woods" is not only still around, but he's leaving his outsized footprints all over the Internet floor. But who exactly is this legendary hairball? It's time he came into town and got himself cleaned up. Hey, Mister! Yeah, you with the tennis rackets on your feet (check out the elaborate racket hoax at **http://www.moneymaker.org/BFRR/GDB/CNTS/MA/HN/ma_hn001.htm**), it's time to stop lumbering half-seen between the Redwood trees and stand up and be counted. This is your last chance to explain yourself. So, are you the lost soul of ancient man or an embarrassed insurance salesman returning from a fancy dress party?

The Internet receives thousands of reported Bigfoot sightings every year. Most, like Sasquatch Sightings **(http://www.moneymaker.org/BFRR/GDB)** or The Western Bigfoot Society **(http://www.teleport.com/~caveman/wbs.html)** are deadly serious and tell of footprint finds, shrill screams, lung-thumping hollers, spine-shuddering encounters, guns drawn from holsters, discarded ice-creams and eyewitnesses who will never go camping again. Approach these stories with care – cries in the forest are more often about human weakness than towers of strength. It's the I-Drive-A-Winnebago-Therefore-I-Am-Not factor.

Photographs, on the other hand, can't lie. Much. The Shadowlands Bigfoot Page **(http://www.serve.com/shadows/bf.htm)** has plenty. There's the famous blurry dark shadow in slightly less dark foliage, there are weird tracks sketched upon muddy ground and there are one or two pictures of giant footsteps, always found near some carefully-positioned tape measure. Strange, sure, but not that exciting. But Shadowlands has saved the most shocking snap until last: a photo taken

Rhyme and reason

The Sasquatch Journal Poetry Club

http://oberon.educ.sfu.ca/sasq/sasqhome.htm

Large mythical man-beasts in literature are few and far between. Large mythical man-beasts and the love poem are even rarer. The Sasquatch Journal fills that missing link. Containing over 40 poems, this collection of yeti stanzas boasts such gems as *He Rumbles Through The Bush, He Gathers Himself In The Cedar Shade* and the more personal and suggestive *What Does It Look Like?*. Here, though, in all its abstract glory, is the classic *Man Moving Shaggy*. We're especially fond of the Girl Scout Troop bit...

MAN MOVING SHAGGY

Thru the forest not a man awkward as a bear
Though he's never seen by local inhabitants only tourists
With lens cap still covered eyes barely open
Girl scout troops frozen shriek look out
When he scoots anonymous extinct seven foot limbs
Brief seconds livelier than legend across
The corner of the clearing of an eye gone faster
Than the blink of National Geographic
Into the blank wilderness that knows him.

Gorilla Gallery

Will the real Mr Bigfoot please step forward...

Shadowlands Bigfoot Page
http://www.serve.com/shadows/bf.htm
Taken on July 11 1995 by Bigfoot boffin Cliff Crook, this odious creature/carefully moulded knot of pond weed was snapped in the Wild Creek area of the Snoqualmie National Forest.

Colombian Bigfoot
http://www.login.net/yvonlect/14.html
"Hello sir!" Slumped or quite possibly strapped into a chair, a South American Yeti that's either dead, anorexic or has been whooping it up in one of the many mountainside cocoa plantations.

Bigfoot Contact Guide
http://www.hooked.net/~kylemi/bfguide.html
"Bigfoot Hairy Love Mountain In Teenage Groupie Shocker!" Proof that if you sell your mythology well enough, the ladies will scour the whole forest. The moss-flavoured condoms are, presumably, on him.

The Sasquatch Page
http://www.teleport.com/~progrsch/
Taken by Rene Dahinden in 1996, this disturbing close-up shows Bigfoot in full blusher and lipstick mode. Cross-dresser!

Connect Exclusive!
http://gull/eebul.com/
The most convincing photographic evidence so far: sasquatch caught in hirsute Hamlet moment.

from the foothills of the Snoqualmie National Forest. Standing naked, except for a barber's bucket of matted black hair, is a suspension-bridge-shouldered swamp monkey thing with a severe absence of that joining arrangement generally known as the neck.

When somebody asks Can Bigfoot Be Killed? **(http://www.kent.net/paranormal/bigfoot/killed.html)**, they presumably don't have five rounds of contact judo in mind. After all, the swamp dweller is larging it in every sense. Imagine, ooh, a steroid-munching David Bellamy. Add around 120 tabs of purest PCP and a stench so putrid it can melt leather at 100 paces. Got it? Now take a trip to Strange Smells In Montana **(http://www.ncf.carleton.ca/~bz050/HomePage.montana.html)**.

The Bigfoot Contact Guide **(http://www.hooked.net/~kylemi/bfguide.html)** takes a far more sensible approach. If confronted by some form of unidentified walking haystack, they say, DON'T PANIC. Or make any sudden moves. Or light a cigarette. Or flap your arms and scream blue murder. Just slowly bend down and smell a flower or offer the nearby beastie a similarly lovely alternative. If all goes well and you feel The Urge, things could even heat up in other departments. Although there's even less evidence of success here.

Kyle out of Kyle's Bigfoot Pages **(http://www.hooked.net/~kylemi/bigfoot.html)** would really, *really* love to get that close. Kyle, you see, is a self-confessed, self-financed, sasquatch-searcher. Dressed in a superb pair of jungle-blending comedy shorts, he scavenges for any discarded Bigfootery – body hair, unwanted ears, extraneous limbs, that sort of thing.

Kyle unwittingly reveals what drives him and other Internet yo!-yeti-yellers on in their endless search. Kyle has never actually had a Bigfoot encounter – in fact, he's never even seen a single footprint, let alone felt his legs being torn clean away from his body. Nevertheless, he's truly, madly, deeply obsessed and believes that the Bigfoot is not only for real, but "more intelligent than most people".

Sasquatch searcher Kyle is truly, madly, deeply obsessed, and believes that Bigfoot is not only for real, but "more intelligent than most people".

Kyle and his cohorts seem to be drawn to the wildness of nature itself. For every thousand skyscraper, orbital satellite and lava lamp there's a real-life Honey Monster on the loose. Kyle feels better. Less tamed. He goes out into the forest. In his shorts. No man can control him here; it's just him and the biggest-footed primeval bastard in the history of the world. Whether it's real or fictional doesn't matter – it's a human thing.

But surely so many sightings by so many ordinary folk can't be wrong. At Bigfoot: The Rational And Beyond **(http://fox.nstn.ca/~raygavel/links/rational.html#rational)** the site authors point to Darwin's famous "missing link". In 1929, Francis de Loys shot and killed a "man beast" in the hills of South America. The photograph shows a massive ape-like creature slumped in a chair. It's the very same beast identified by the Russian scientist Dimitri Bayanov as "a diluter of the human race".

A diluter! No wonder the Chinese Government **(http://www.hooked.net/~kylemi/bfnews.html)** takes the phenomenon so seriously. It's set up a committee to investigate a century's worth of reports about a seven-foot tall, 47-stone wild man who answers to the name of Kawasaki. A trick of the light or the mutant offspring of a bear and a bloke? You know the much-loved sociological argument about the table manners of the wolfboy in 19th century France...

If you want to see every side of the colossal critter debate, The Internet Virtual Bigfoot Conference **(http://www.teleport.com/~caveman/faq95b.html)** is almost as big as the ol' brute himself. A long way from our horrified cries of "It's a monster!", the Sioux Indians refer to the bigfoot as "Chiye", or 'older brother'. Chiye is both physical

and spiritual, and can guide you through the forest in both forms. He there, he not. He friend, as they say. This ties in rather neatly with the notion that the Bigfoot has the same "invisible powers" as those developed in radar research by the US Navy's Philadelphia Experiment in 1943 **(http://mmm.simplenet.com/frames/philadelphia_experiment/philadelphia.html)**.

But what the Sioux have overlooked is the possibility that Bigfoot is an invader from outer space. Having lost his craft, the Martian is forced to live on nuts, berries and the occasional bean hand-out until his friends arrive in the year 4453. Robert W Morgan **(http://www.talismanmedia.com/)** and his Aliens, Abductions, Bigfoot, Crytozoology, UFO And Espionage pages (phew) certainly seems to think so. Strange Magazine **(http://www.cais.net/strangemag/home.html)** is another ideal spot to park the trailer for this sort of view.

Experts, however, regard the alien idea as passé. Wade through the footbath of e-mail addresses at The North American Bigfoot Society **(http://www.fn.net/~mdennis/northa~1.htm)** and you'll find every sasquatch researcher this side of Care In The Community.

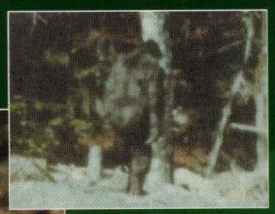
Kansas Bigfoot Sightings **(http://www.fn.net/~mdennis/kbchom~1.htm**) are so frequent, you'd think the growler-prowler works on a regular drop-in-for-coffee basis. The Sierra Sound Site **(http://www.teleport.com/~biggie/)** goes one better and aims straight for the vertical horse's mouth. Yes, those noises are the unmistakable chatter of yeti-a-likes yakking in the Nevada mountains.

Bigfoot gets weirder e-mail than most. Scott Herriot **(http://www.uspan.com/u-laff/Bigfoot.html)** thinks it may not be sexual. Obviously he hasn't read the poetry on offer in The Sasquatch Journal **(http://oberon.educ.sfu.ca/sasq/sasqhome.htm)**.

Somebody once described the Bigfoot phenomenon as "a holy quest conducted by unholy men". This isn't strictly the case. Fear of the unknown is no longer the primary emotion; fear of the known is what drives on the delirium of the alt.bigfoot newsgroup. Life sucks, but at least there's another reality out there.

As long as the Internet retains its gather-round-the-campfire indifference to the facts, Bigfoot sightings, stories and sub-sexual fantasies will only gather more moss as they roll along the forest floor. Who knows, maybe the vast varmint really *is* out there, laughing his canyon-cracking cackle as he hears yet another tale of his own bad-assed mythology related across the universe – this time from down a wire. He's the wildest, oldest, most primitive man-beast in the kingdom, but it seems neither science nor technology can tame him.

Do Bears...



Roger Patterson's film remains the hottest area of Bigfoot debate. Patterson, in case you hadn't heard, had already penned a book called *Do Abominable Snowment Really Exist?* before he shot that famous footage. Its sequel, potentially entitled *Roger Patterson's 101 Uses For Outsized Gorilla Costumes*, sadly never saw the light of day. The following sites are devoted to those 24 feet of colour film. Fact or farce? You decide!

Roger Patterson's Bigfoot

http://www.open.org/mark82/bigfoot.gif

Hanging hairy by the thicket, this still from the movie shows apeboy in his traditional plank-armed, sub-Neanderthal gait. Stare carefully and you can just make out Jim Davidson as Robin Hood and an array of Aussie soap stars.

Bigfoot Goes To Hollywood

http://parascope.com/articles/1196/bigfoot.htm

Sporting the latest theory about Patterson's film, this site suggests he was a Hollywood make-up artist with keys to the department marked "Props". Or, more specifically, the door that read "King Kong Boiler Suits".

Sasquatch: The Evidence

http://sbwm.erols.com/bdwilner/.../cryptozoo/

At last, footage from the movie itself. Look! MONSTER! Look! SCARY! Look! ALIVE! Roger Patterson, by the way, died some years ago. However, his wife and his partner, Robert Gimlin, are still keeping well stumm.

Weird

VOICES IN HIS HEAD: **ANDY COBLEY**
acobley@mic.dundee.ac.uk

BABY EATS HAMSTER

Name: Ovi's World Of The Bizarre
What is it? Tales of the unexpected.
Where you'll find it: http://www.ovis.com/
What's it like? Home to literally hundreds of "true" stories culled from the world's newspapers, you can read about the three-eyed man from China, boggle at the lonely lady who dug up her husband's skull for company and laugh at the world's stupidest criminals. Other treats include the USA's 25 weirdest sex laws and an AMAZING-BUT-TRUE! fact generator. Did you know, for instance, that although sharks never sleep they do snore? Wander through these pages and then amaze your friends down the pub with a stream of absolutely-true-honest-to-God-guvnor stories.
Upside: A vast quantity of amazing tales.
Downside: Cruddy indexing and navigation makes it well-nigh impossible to find anything more than once.
Typical quote: "Lester 'Bear' Bryant was convicted of shooting his girlfriend's brother, Paul Thomas, for eating a slice of his lemon meringue pie. Bryant, 41, could get up to 50 years in prison for his crime."
Overall: ★★★★

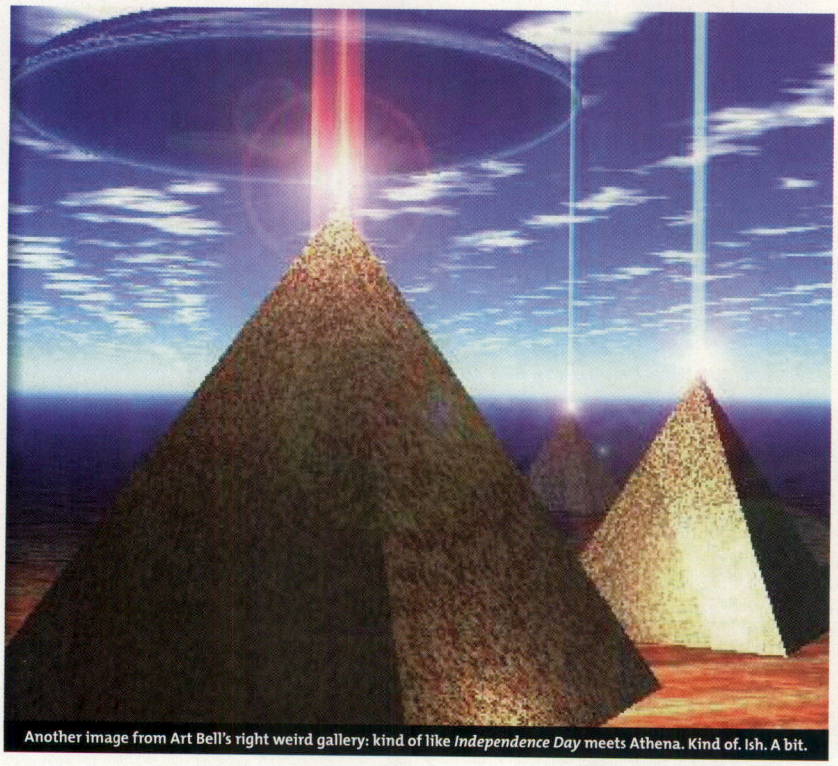
ROLL ON THE MILLENIUM

Name: Sedona On-line
What is it? You want New Age interplanetary spiritual rantings? You got it!
Where you'll find it: http://www.sedona.net/sd/aquarian/
What's it like? Combining pseudoscience with religious concepts, Gabriel of Sedonna has brought together like-minded individuals in the mountains of Arizona to create the Aquarian Concepts Community. The Web site explains the basic philosophy of the group and invites you to join them on one of their many weekend seminars. If their vision comes to fruition, the Aquarian Concepts Community will receive the second coming of Christ and set up a celestial city to form the divine government for the next millennium. Won't that be fun?
Upside: They're on the other side of the Atlantic to us.
Downside: As the millennium draws near, throngs of nutcases emerge from all over the place.
Typical quote: "The adult and teen Starseed Schools of Melchizedek teach revelatory interuniversal truths pertinent to your soul's home planet."
Overall: ★★

The Art Bell Web page is heaving with oddball images: here, for some reason, is a cat jumping over a kitchenosaur.

RADIO WAVES IN YOUR HEAD

Name: Art Bell Web Page
What is it? Weirdsville radio show hits the Web.
Where you'll find it: http://www.artbell.com
What's it like? Art Bell runs a fantastically popular radio show in the States dedicated to the paranormal. His Web site is proving to be equally popular with those who are eager to believe. The site is always bringing its viewers new and exciting developments from the world where science fears to tread, and is ready to believe any tale, no matter how fantastic. Many of the discussions on the paranormal newsgroups are triggered by something that appeared here or on Art's radio show. Enjoy the "controversial" pictures, tales and points of view; just remember not to believe everything you read.
Upside: An absolute minefield of weirdness.
Downside: Thanks to a hefty load of pictures, the site always takes an age to down-load.
Typical quote: "This letter was sent to Art and arrived on April 18, 1996. Along with this letter were pieces of various metals."
Overall: ★★★★



Another image from Art Bell's right weird gallery: kind of like *Independence Day* meets Athena. Kind of. Ish. A bit.

COUNTING SHEEP

Name: Sleeping On The Internet
What is it? A resource for insomniacs.
Where you'll find it: http://www.newtechpub.com/phantom
What's it like? You may find it strange to see a page like this categorised as weird, but some of the things that go on while we're sleeping are downright peculiar. This is a list of resources for those who have trouble nodding off at night or find themselves plagued by old hags pressing down on their chests while they're sleeping. *You* may not have woken up unable to move, frozen by an unknown force, but plenty of people have. Sleeping On The Internet proffers an explanation for these strange occurrences, and even ventures into the realms of alien abduction.
Upside: An essential stop-off for insomniacs.
Downside: You have to plough through loads of sensible, scientific material before you get to the out-of-whack stuff.
Typical quote: "Snoring is a cry for help from a person strangling for air. Yet we tend to laugh at snoring, get angry at the snorer for keeping us from sleeping, or dismiss snoring as a sign of good sleep. Snoring may sound like a fog horn to warn sailors of danger. In fact, snoring is certainly not funny – it is a warning of danger."
Overall: ★★★

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

Name: The Marfa Mystery Lights
What is it? Headlamps in the Texas countryside.
Where you'll find it: http://www.marfalights.com
What's it like? The floating lights sometimes seen outside the small Texas town of Marfa

Hot Spot!

BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MOON

Pagans believe that our energy levels wax and wane with the moon. Here are some of the deities you might like to name next time you cast a spell.

(1) The Apache's Changing Woman is Mother of All. She presides over dream work, shape-shifting, insight, wisdom, birth and joy and is associated with flowers and rainbows.

(2) Of Nordic origins, Freyja is a sage, inspirer of sacred poetry and mistress of cats. Her special number is 13 and Friday is her day.

(3) Queen of the night, Greek Hecate presides over the Underworld, witchcraft and spirits. She can change age and form, rejuvenate or kill.

(4) The Horned God exists in many cultures. He's known as Cernunnos, the Green Man and Herne the Hunter, and represents the masculine side of Nature, including panic, desire, agriculture, beer and ale. Mmm... pagan ale.

(5) Kuan Yin is the Chinese goddess of fertility, compassion, childbirth and the moon.

Name: The Witches' Web
What is it? News and important dates and symbols for bonafide witches.
Where you'll find it: http://www.witchesweb.com/
What's it like? The Witches' Web is laden down with valuable info for the practising sorceress, but don't expect to pick up spells and curses here. This is very much a positive, touchy-feely presentation of witchcraft, focusing on significant dates in the pagan calendar, Wiccan philosophy, folklore, moon goddesses and symbols. More suited to the Earth Mother brand of witch than the satanic worshipper, contributors sport names like Thyagi Morgoth NagaSiva and Lilith Silverhair. It makes for a fascinating read.
Upside: An excellent news section telling of mysterious murders, and railing against the unjust representation of pagans in the media.
Downside: Not a black cat or broomstick in sight.
Typical quote: "May the wisdom of the Silver Goddess and the inspiration of the Horned God accompany you in your travels." Why, thank you.

are something of a classic mystery. These balls of light are clearly visible moving across the countryside from a vantage point on Highway 87. Now, thanks to the joys of Modern Technology, you can gaze upon the phenomenon from down the end of a telephone cable. Sceptics claim the lights are nothing more than cars moving in the distant twilight, yet the've been repeatedly sighted for more than 100 years now. Read up on the history of the phenomenon and scrutinise tantalising photos and movie clips of the mystery balls in their full pixellated glory.
Upside: Watch videos of the lights moving about!
Downside: The scurrilous rumour that the site's run by the local tourist board.
Typical quote: "They float, they ebb, they glow and move... And they defy explanation."
Overall: ★★★★

NORDIC NESSIE

Name: Swedish Lake Monsters
What is it? The hot pursuit of Scandinavian freshwater monsters.
Where you'll find it: http://www.bahnhof.se/~wizard/GLM/
What's it like? The site authors are looking to raise enough dosh to fund an expedition to the great lake Storsjon, in the depths of which a monster allegedly lurks. But they're going to need a lot of cash to search the 456-square kilometres of lake for what could be just an oversized cat fish. The site sets out the purpose of the expedition and some of the facts behind the local legend of a beast cruising the lake's dark waters. There's even a video of the supposed monster for sale.
Upside: Sponsor the group's expedition or even take part.
Downside: One unconvincing picture of the beast in question.
Typical quote: "24 witnesses have said that The Great Lake Monster had a very high speed. The animal seems to be capable of a speed between 10 to 15 knots, up to 20 knots and maybe exceeding this."
Overall: ★★★

RODS FROM SPAAACE!

Name: Rods
What is it? Is it a bird, is it a plane, is it a bug? No, it's a rod.

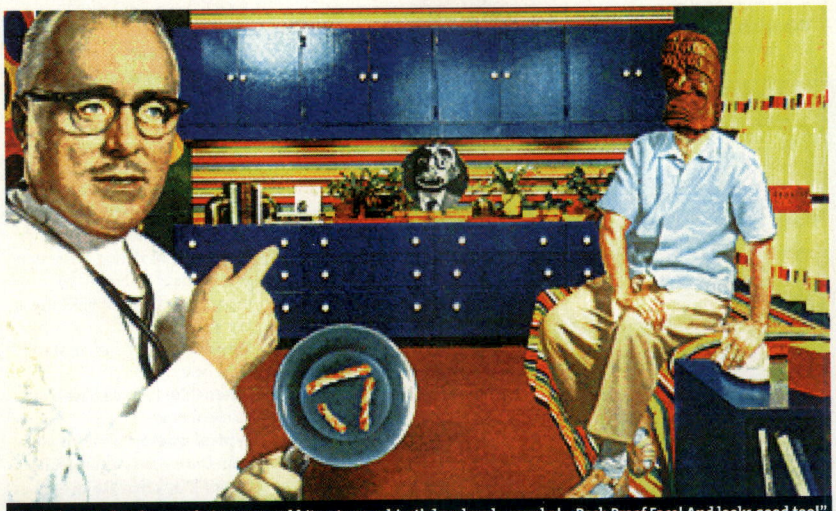
Where you'll find it: http://www.roswellrods.com/rods.html
What's it like? Just when you thought you'd heard all there was to know about the infamous New Mexico town, something like this turns up. The site presents so-called videos of mysterious rods travelling out of the ground and into the sky. Recorded by camcorders in Midway, a town nine miles southeast of Roswell, and taken from off-air broadcasts, the videos are presented as animated GIFs, some of which have been "enhanced" by embossing the GIF. It makes for an interesting sight, but their authenticity is highly dubious.
Upside: Lots of evidence for you to peruse.
Downside: Yet another unconvincing Web site.
Typical quote: "The most astounding thing about the Rods is that they appear to have intelligence and be alive! There is no evidence in their appearance to suggest they are mechanical or made of metal."
Overall: ★★★★

JOHN LENNON BODY SNATCHED SHOCKER

Name: UFO Discovery Home Page
What is it? A hefty collection of UFO-files.
Where you'll find it: http://people.netcom.co.uk/i.read/
What's it like? UFO pages are two a penny these days and tend to regurgitate the same old stories and pictures. This site, however, boasts more unusual tales, many of which may be new to you. Highlights include an account of John Lennon's flying saucer encounter and Ronald Reagan's obsession with alien invasion. There's also a small selection of the latest UFO news and a large archive of sightings, mostly in zip format, for you to down-load and read off-line.
Upside: Loads of well-organised information.
Downside: The experience is akin to clearing out an old filing cabinet. What, no graphics?
Typical quote: "The policemen approached the UFO after watching it for almost half an hour. When they were some 50 metres away from it, the object started to move upwards and away from them into the air, then accelerated towards Vilnius."
Overall: ★★★

WEIRDOS A-GO-GO

Name: Kooks Museum
What is it? Nutters.
Where you'll find it: http://www.teleport.com/~dkossy/
What's it like? The Kooks Museum's been around almost as long as the Web's existed, and it just keeps getting better. Donna's been taking note of the world's nutcases for years now. Visit the Schizophrenic Wing, the Hall Of Hate, the Library Of Questionable Scholarship and the newly-installed links to kooks on-line. To witness just how out of control some of these people are, you can even feast your eyes upon scanned-in flyers and hand-outs, which Donna's lovingly collected.
Upside: With so many nutters out there, the Kooks Museum will never run short of material.
Downside: You might fall for one of these basket case's ideas.
Typical quote: "Defy gravity! Feel perpetual motion! See UFOs emerge from within the Hollow Earth!"
Overall: ★★★★★



"Zo I take ze teflon from ze frying pan, weld it onto ze subject's head and – eureka! – Bash Proof Face! And looks good too!"

Conspiracies

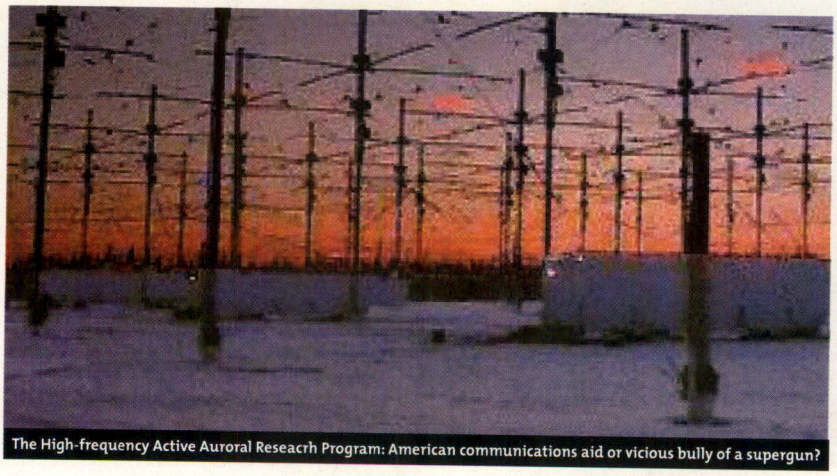
GRASSY KNOLL-IT-ALL: **WARREN ELLIS**
100617.3635@compuserve.com

I WANT A BLINDBOMB

Name: Terrible Technology
What is it? Exploring the secret technology that will control or kill us all.
Where you'll find it: http://www.newciv.org/~albert/tech/tech-index.html
What's it like? Mad rubbish, and therefore invaluable. As with all the best parapolitics sites, this is the work of a man who sounds like his mother kept him locked in his bedroom during his formative years. All the classic stories are here. HIV is not the cause of AIDS. The flesh-eating disease necrotising fasciitis was engineered for biowarfare purposes. Mind-controlling technologies are being used by intelligence agencies in a Grand Control Plan. And poor old Nostradamus is roped in as proof of a new technological Dark Age.
Upside: Lots of funny reading.
Downside: Ugly layout and dead links.
Typical quote: "According to Nostradamus all these variations on the black technology will be used by the Antichrist and the New World Order, the mysterious 'Cabal'..."
Overall: ★★★

DARK SKIES

Name: The Alternative HAARP Page
What is it? Either another Yank boondoggle or the weirdest gun in the world.
Where you'll find it: http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1606/akhaarp.html
What's it like? Fascinating. HAARP stands for High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program – you'll hear about it occasionally on the news. The US military claims it's an innocent project studying the Aurora Borealis for communications purposes, bouncing signals off the ionosphere. These people say it's a damned great electromagnetic gun that can change the weather, cause earthquakes, punch holes in the ozone layer and fry people.
Upside: Nicely designed with lots of relevant links.
Downside: Could use a little more content of its own.
Typical quote: "If you prefer alternative views about HAARP, other than Uncle Sam's reassurances, peruse further..."
Overall: ★★★★


The High-frequency Active Auroral Reseacrh Program: American communications aid or vicious bully of a supergun?

WITNESS THE PARANOIA

As part of Richard Lee's campaign to reveal the evil truth of Cobain's death, he's even been interviewed on US telly. Here's part of the transcript:

"One of the particularly horrifying features of my life as the sole investigator of the Kurt Cobain murder these two long years has been that I am keenly aware that the sorts of people who are distinctly implicated as possibly behind the Cobain murder – the Mafia, show-business sleazos, the Seattle Police Department – are not at all the kind of schemers who sit back and do nothing as they're being criticised. Rather, they're the sort who like to exert pressure immediately, brutally if it suits their needs. I've felt long overdue for retribution. Foremost among my concerns is that I will be murdered by the Seattle Police Department... They're the most likely entity to set me up for a murder, or to just do it themselves."

HOLES IN THE HEAD

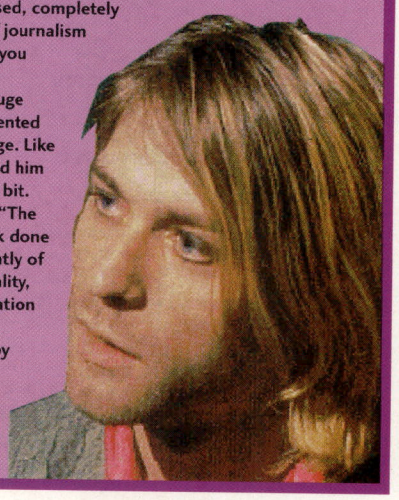
Name: Marti Koski – Page About Illegal Human Experimenting And Alternative History
What is it? A plea for help.
Where you'll find it: http://www.netti.fi/~makako/mind/index.html
What's it like? A big sloppy site run by a Finnish emigrant living in Canada, who claims to be a victim of those strange folk who shove radio transmitters in people's heads. In the tear-soaked, heart-wrenching document entitled My Life, he begs for our help in fending off these evil creatures. You'll laugh for an unpleasantly long time.
Upside: First-hand accounts of cranial intervention by Unknown Bastards are always fun.
Downside: It looks like it's been coded by someone with bits of radio in their brain.
Typical quote: "An Attempt To Speak Out To Save Myself Before It's Too Late For Me And For All Of Us!"
Overall: ★★★

CONSPIRE WITH ME

Name: Black Ops
What is it? A hyperlinked list of all known conspiracy theories.
Where you'll find it: http://www.cruzio.com/~blackops/
What's it like? Co-run by Robert Anton Wilson, the author of *Illuminatus*, it's a grand project in theory, but disappointing on closer inspection. The Great Catalogue is an alphabetised list of all known conspiracy theories documented on-line. Still, while it's not the blistering dissection of mad ideas you're led to expect, it *is* the best links site in the world.
Upside: Insanity-surfing starts right here.
Downside: It could have been so much more.
Typical quote: "We need your help. Did we miss a conspiracy theory that you'd like to have us consider for our research?"
Overall: ★★★★

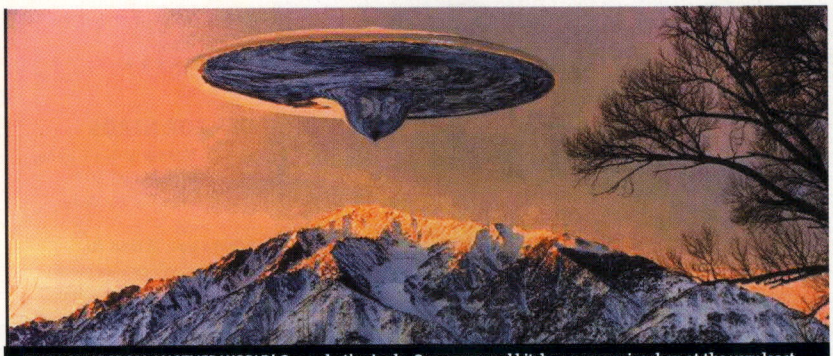
HotSpot!

Name: Kurt Cobain Was Murdered
What is it? The Truth about the death of Seattle's favourite son.
Where you'll find it: http://www.speakeasy.org/~kurtwasm/
What's it like? A gorgeously paranoid, hateful piece of journalism. Richard Lee is convinced that good old Kurt (kindly described by Rush Limbaugh as "a worthless shred of human debris") didn't chew on that shotgun quite as enthusiastically as you've been led to believe. Think about it. Seattle Police Department, the King County Medical Examiners AND Courtney Love all seem to be convinced he topped himself. It *must* be a conspiracy. Relentlessly detailed and insanely researched, this is hugely entertaining and very nearly convincing.
Upside: You just don't see this kind of intensely focussed, completely barking kind of journalism any more. And you should.
Downside: A huge document presented on one Web page. Like it would've killed him to break it up a bit.
Typical quote: "The fingerprint work done at SPD is evidently of very limited quality, as their examination of the shotgun allegedly used by Cobain to kill himself had 'no legible prints'."



Aliens

HAS PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF LITTLE GREEN GEEKS: **DAVE GOLDER**
dgolder@futurenet.co.uk



THEY CAME FROM ANOTHER WORLD! Or a robot's nipple. Or an unusual kitchen accessories shop at the very least...

BIRD, PLANE OR FAIRY LIQUID BOTTLE?

Name: The UFO Page
What is it? A photographic gallery of UFOs and crop circles.
Where you'll find it: http://www.sci.fi/~omu/ufo.html?
What's it like? A growing collection of mostly unconvincing alien evidence photos, presented in a stylish, easy-to-use layout. Pretty crop circles and '50s-style flying saucers abound. Part of a UFO Web ring, site author Omar is keen for visitors to send in their own blurred pictures of hastily hurtled hub caps and refracted light beams, as well as material for his as yet pitifully empty Documents section.
Upside: Top-quality JPEGs and a comprehensive set of links.
Downside: A complete lack of commentary on the pictures, many of which are just so obviously fake.
Typical quote: "Click on the picture to see it in real size."
Overall: ★★★

BAKING A FAKE

Name: Aliens From The Roswell Crash of 1947?
What is it? A surprisingly in-depth investigation into the validity of the Roswell alien pictures that appeared in various magazines a couple of years back.
Where you'll find it: http://web2.airmail.net/yogi/rmuseum.html#Ming PAO Weekly
What's it like? One huge scrolling document, lavishly illustrated with pictures of what look like medical training dummies that have been left too close to a radiator. Comprising features, letters and e-mails from various "experts", the site author sets out to prove that the aliens were actually leftover models from an American TV movie on Roswell. His vehemence makes for a fascinating read.
Upside: Strangely absorbing, sceptical without being annoying and very convincing.
Downside: Repetitive and lacking in links.
Typical quote: "It does appear that someone has used a pen or some computer program like Photoshop to cover over the genital area..."
Overall: ★★★★

PLEASE BELIEVE ME

Name: Doctor Jason Leigh
What is it? One man's crusade to prove that he's filmed a UFO.
Where you'll find it: http://members.aol.com/ufolabnm/index.htm
What's it like? Leigh, an ex-TV news photographer, filmed what he believes to be a UFO back in June 1995. Since then he's taken an avid interest in the skies above. His site is a thorough campaign to prove that he's not a hoaxer or lunatic. You can see how Leigh's claims have been received in his diary of media interviews and peruse numerous articles. Throw in news areas, a request for others who've experienced close encounters to send in their stories and a bizarre tour around Roswell (hosted by the Roswell Alien Lifeform – RALF) and you have an intriguing and passion-filled, albeit unconvincing, site.
Upside: Acquitted with a sense of fun, while the so-called evidence is lavishly piled on.
Downside: Leigh's gushing style leaves him wide open to "he's a loony" accusations.
Typical quote: "On January 24, 1997, a cattle rancher, Ed Longcope of Kingsbury (near San Antonia, Texas), found a spherical object on his property. He could not figure out what it was. But he knew that it had fallen from the sky."
Overall: ★★★

COVERING ALL EVENTUALITIES

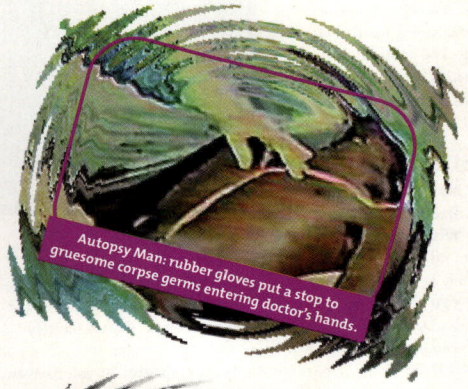
Name: Alien Abduction Insurance Cover
What is it? A fiendish plot to part susceptible Trekkers and X-philes from their money.
Where you'll find it: http://www.gslink.net/~ufo/
What's it like? Reminiscent of some dodgy ad in a Sunday tabloid. For a mere $21.95 you stand to gain $10 million should you ever be abducted. The scheme purports to be all in fun, but you can bet whoever's behind it hopes to make a fast buck. Seeing as most folks have trouble convincing the insurance company that a lorry ploughing through their house wasn't a scam, it's highly unlikely anyone will ever get rich this way.
Upside: It's difficult to find.
Downside: Like the Lottery, it feeds on the gullibility of the mentally unsound.
Typical quote: "Since 1987, the The UFO Abduction Insurance Company has boldly gone where no insurance company has gone before and offers the perfect policy for anyone who thinks they have everything covered."
Overall: ★

HotSpot!

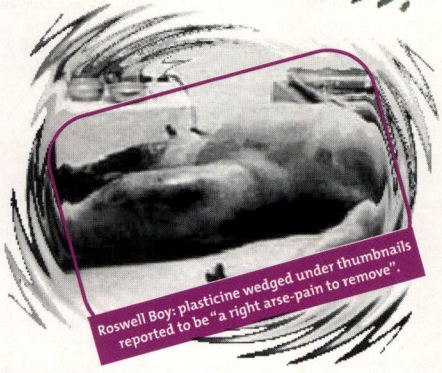
Name: Alien's Stargate
What is it? A lightweight but entertaining look at the paranormal, including supernatural sound bites, extraterrestrial titbits and dodgy investigative journalism.
Where you'll find it: http://members.aol.com/alienb25/alien.html
What's it like? Welcome to The Hitchhiker's Guide To Close Encounters. Alien Stargate may not be the most well-researched document on all things saucer related, but its breadth of coverage is certainly impressive. Movies of blurred thingies skidding across the sky, UFO pics, encounter stories, rough guides to Roswell, cattle mutilation and an A to Z of alien visitation lore do their best to titillate. A healthy dose of cynicism helps matters, although methinks the Web authors protest their geekdom a tad too much.
Upside: A vast and diverse range of features, with loads of down-loadable blurriness.
Downside: Weeny text, uninspiring layout and just a few too many broken links.
Typical quote: "The plane was designed for aliens because it's impossible for normal humans to share the armrest. It's too thin for two people. Aliens have thinner arms..."

NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH

Debunking the Roswell Alien autopsy footage seems to be all the rage on-line, perhaps because the Internet fuelled the whole thing in the first place by posting photographic 'evidence' in every corner of the Web. While Alien's Stargate isn't as in-depth as Aliens From The Roswell Crash of 1947? (see review opposite) it does take the novel step of comparing the alien autopsy with a real one. Go on, have a peek.



Autopsy Man: rubber gloves put a stop to gruesome corpse germs entering doctor's hands.



Roswell Boy: plasticine wedged under thumbnails reported to be "a right arse-pain to remove".

Mad Science

LABTECH LABOTOMY: **ANDY STOUT**
andy@stout.demon.co.uk

I'M A ROCKET, MAN

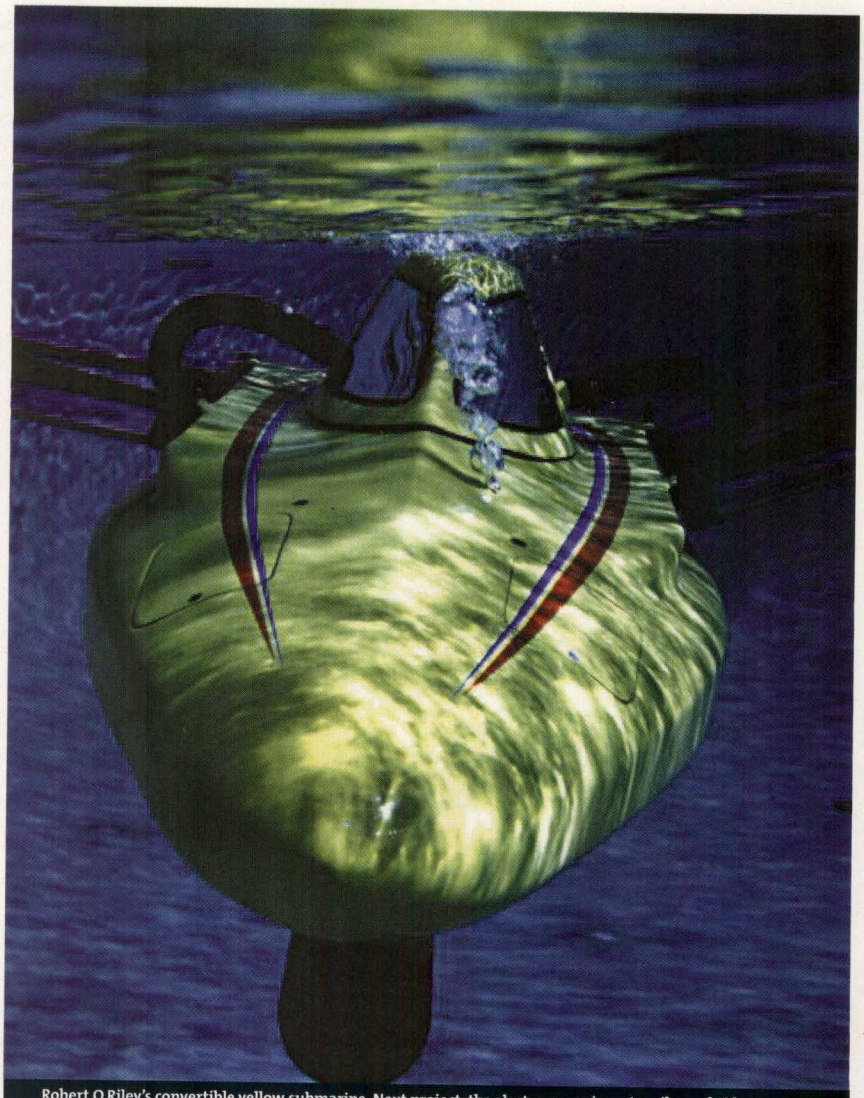
Name: Rocket Belt Dot Com
What is it? Jet pack addicts on-line.
Where you'll find it: http://www.rocket-belt.com/home.htm
What's it like? On April 20 1961, Harold Graham piloted the first Bell Rocket Belt and flew a distance of 112ft. The military were terribly excited by all this until they realised that sending soldiers into battle with inflammable fuel tanks strapped to their bodies wasn't a particularly good idea. The military went on to have much brighter ones involving Vietnam. The Bell Rocket Belt meanwhile made a brief appearance in a James Bond movie before sinking into obscurity. Until, that is, the invention of the RB-2000, a rocket belt for the new millennium.
Upside: Everything you always wanted to know about rocket belts is here, complete with stupid animations, a link to the implausibly ace Flying Contraptions home page and the usual logo-on-a-mug merchandise.
Downside: Life expectancy, singed leg hair, etc.
Typical quote: "Seeing the craft in the sunlight, the gleam that emanates from the fuel tanks and rocket nozzles is dazzling. The rocket belt is a true beauty."
Overall: ★★★★

SLIP SLIDING AWAY

Name: Slide Rule Trading Post
What is it? Incredible but true – it's the World Wide Web's only Java slide rule.
Where you'll find it: http://www.ozemail.com.au/~gamers/adavie/slide.index.html
What's it like? Simply amazing. At first you think someone *must* be taking the piss, but no, people do actually collect slide rules. Fanatically. *Passionately.* They even make special display stands for them. It seems that Picketts are The Brand To Collect, although a couple of postings from people who worked on the Apollo mission dispute their role in the moon landings. As for the strange odour every time you load up the site – smells like geek spirit.
Upside: The big collectors haven't moved in yet so prices are still cheap. You'd better get in there quick.
Downside: You know those dynamic hobbies that can make you irresistibly attractive to the opposite sex? This definitely isn't one of them.
Typical quote: "If you have any H-P calculators and/or accessories and you're looking for slide rules, then we could do a deal."
Overall: ★★★★

WALK ON. BYE.

Name: Ross Tsukashima's Unsinkable Walk On Water
What is it? An annual competition run at the University of San Diego.
Where you'll find it: http://www.inetworld.net/~tsukar/wow.html
What's it like? Bloody students. There you are, slaving your fingers to the bone to pay your taxes while they're arsing about in foolish competitions like this one. The goal is to negotiate a slalom course across a swimming pool while wearing shoes of your own design that cost less than $100 to make (this is presumably to prevent NASA getting in there and spoiling the fun). The full rules, engineering diagrams and photographs of people falling into water are available on the site to help you get started.
Upside: People might think you're the Messiah.
Downside: Go on. Just try to think of a practical application for all this.
Typical quote: "A support team of up to six people may assist in the application of the shoes and in the transition from sitting to the officially sanctioned vertical position. Once vertical, no assistance may be offered until the pilot arrives at the far end of the swimming pool."
Overall: ★★★★



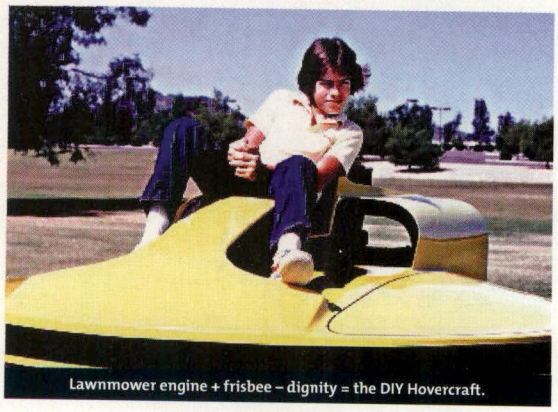
Robert Q Riley's convertible yellow submarine. Next project: the electro-organic motorpike and sidecarp. Sorry.

GAP FOR NERDS

Name: Smart Clothes
What is it? MIT's wearable computer home page.
Where you'll find it: http://wearables.www.media.mit.edu/projects/wearables/
What's it like? Eventually we'll all be wandering around with enough computer technology strapped to us to make the Borg look like Neolithic cavemen. Over at MIT, however, they want to live in the future NOW. The upshot is that people wander round campus with various bits of hard drive dangling from their belts and keyboards strapped to their wrists. Held back only by technology, most of the information you'll find here is punctuated by phrases like "Won't it be great when...?"
Upside: Makes a Nokia 9000 seem the equivalent of two yoghurt pots joined by a piece of string.
Downside: No girlfriends and people openly pointing and laughing at you.
Typical quote: "I have typed over two million characters on my wearable computer!" Christ...
Overall: ★★★

CAR TOSH

Name: Robert Q Riley Enterprises
What is it? Futuristic vehicles that you can build in your own home.
Where you'll find it: http://www.netzone.com/~rqriley/
What's it like? Bored with the current range of cars? Looking for something that reflects your true individuality? How about



Lawnmower engine + frisbee – dignity = the DIY Hovercraft.

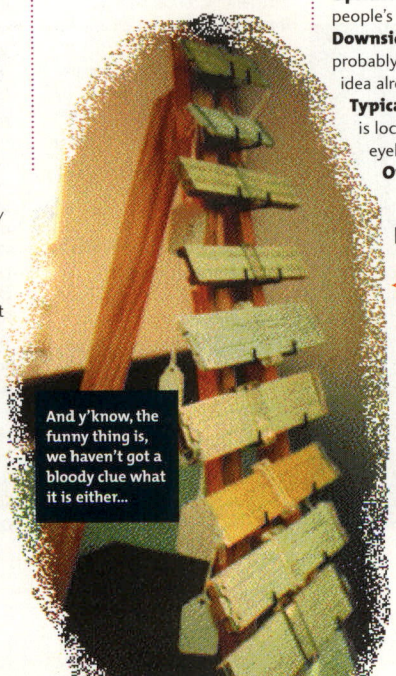
ripping the guts out of a lawnmower and building your own hovercraft? Or a three-wheeled trike from the *Terminator* films? Or a submarine, for that matter? All this and even dafter forms of propulsion are available alongside musings on the current state of transportation. Yes, you too can scream, "But it's exempt from taxation, officer!" as you whizz past the rozzers mounted on a couple of tons of batteries.
Upside: Admit it, you'd just love a go on a hovercraft, wouldn't you?
Downside: Some of these contraptions make the Sinclair C5 look practical.
Typical quote: "Alternative Cars in the 21st Century: A New Personal Transportation Paradigm."
Overall: ★★★

GETCHA ROCKS OFF

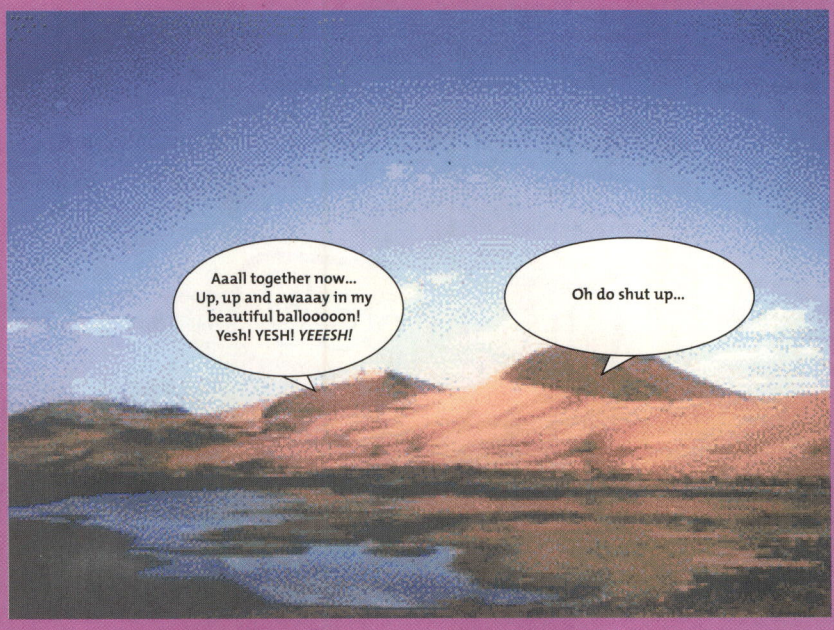
Name: Bob's Rock Shop
What is it? Porn for geologists.
Where you'll find it: http://www.rockhounds.com/
What's it like? Bob collects rocks. In fact, Bob gets seriously excited by collecting rocks and wants to share his unbounded enthusiasm with YOU. Everything the amateur geologist could ever possibly want to know is contained on his server, together with essential links to a geologist's T-shirt catalogue (sample shirt: "This is no ordinary collector you're dealing with") and a wonderful section called Rocks In The News. How often do rocks make it on to CNN? Well, you'd be surprised... Actually no, you probably wouldn't.
Upside: You are not an amateur geologist; you're a rockhound. See? So much sexier and cooler.
Downside: Rubbing feldspar phenocrysts over your naked body in public is illegal.
Typical quote: "I collect therefore I am."
Overall: ★★★★

RUNNING URSA

Name: Aboriginal (Native American) Star Knowledge
What is it? A guide to the astronomical achievements of those chaps the cowboys used to shoot.
Where you'll find it: http://indy4.fdl.cc.mn.us/~isk/stars/starmenu.html
What's it like? Read about how archaeologists unearthed the Native American equivalent of Stonehenge. Gen up on yer basic astronomy. Then top it all off with a great wodge of mythology, prophecy and other spiritual manifestations. The result's somewhat schizophrenic, but this incongruous mix of dirt, stars and New Age gobshite works surprisingly well.
Upside: You too can place a few pebbles in a field to prove the precession of the equinoxes.
Downside: It didn't do them much good really, did it?
Typical quote: "Wakan Tanka intended that we must always hold the Black Hills special to our hearts, so we are reminded every night that we have a sacred home."
Overall: ★★★



Name: Musical Sand Home Page
What is it? Information on the phenomenon that is singing sand.
Where you'll find it: http://www.yo.rim.or.jp/~smiwa/index.html
What's it like? Throughout the world, certain types of silicate sand make a booming noise when moving or being battered by the wind. It never happens on Bournemouth beach, but Darwin noticed this phenomenon during his voyage on The Beagle. Nowadays, no-one seems to give a damn and many singing sand locations are facing imminent environmental catastrophe. But Sigeo Miwa does care and attempts to redress the balance with the help of his erratic Japanese/English phrase book. You want weird science? You got it.
Upside: Photographs, explanations, sound files... The man's enthusiasm is infectious.
Downside: The design is hardly eyes-on-stalks material, and the sand doesn't play requests.
Typical quote: "Nature can be revive the sound by wave motion in the sea or wind action in the desert, whoever hope the restoration the wonderful sound."



HE SAYS SEA SHELLS...

Okay, it's a cheap shot, especially considering how most of us excel in Japanese, but the language on this site is one of its major attractions. Sigeo starts off with the clumsy poetics of, "The mountains gloan every night. Do you believe that?" before moving on to the rather garbled, "However mankind thoroughly ate wild life by population explosion". He also gets poetic in ways a native English speaker wouldn't even consider, introducing the site with the phrase, "I will show you the World of Musical Sand that Mother Nature polished over", and concluding with, "If we can recover clean sea, the sands in the world will recover song". To make a sand dune seem a thing of beauty is no mean feat. For the ultimate soothing reading experience, click around the site while listening to the groaning sand dunes of Badain-Jaram **(http://www.yo.rim.or.jp/~smiwa/sound/bad.wav)**, which sounds for all the world like a gorilla playing the flute.

GOOD HEAD

Name: Phrenology
What is it? An earnest and thorough delve into the (pseudo) science behind character analysis through the size of your head.
Where you'll find it: http://wwwtw.vub.ac.be/ond/etec/cit/phreno/home.htm
What's it like? Worth a giggle. The site starts by detailing the "real" scientific basis behind phrenology, moans that the scientific community laughs up its lab coat sleeve whenever the subject is mentioned, and then explains what the lumps on your head reveal. But when it starts to go on about how valuable this science could be in law enforcement or recruitment, you can't help but worry. The sinister implication is that if only the police would measure everyone's bonce, they could simply bang up the ones who fitted the profile before they've even done anything.
Upside: Get paid to fondle people's heads.
Downside: The Government probably think it's a cracking idea already.
Typical quote: "Individuality is located between the eyebrows."
Overall: ★★★

EUREKA. HIC

Name: Amazing Applications of Modern Technology
What is it? Exactly the sort of thing you'd expect from a gaggle of inebriated Finnish scientists.
Where you'll find it: http://www.megabaud.fi/~tsh/amazing/
What's it like? Finland – a country of five million people and one million saunas. Odd things happen to people up there, like deciding to invent X-ray glasses that enable you to see through clothing. Fair play, you might think, but this site gets all scientific about it, explaining that clothes and skin reflect different parts of the electromagnetic spectrum and if you could just filter out the clothes' wavelength you'd be in nekkid city. And that's just the beginning. There's the unpourable beer, the Macrowave beer cooler, something called LightSand and a battery that works on your fillings.
Upside: Proof that having regular saunas boosts your creative juices.
Downside: Remember that car harpoon in the news late last year? That was Finnish too.
Typical quote: "We have created the TSHg Battery for ultimate circumstances where there is no other source of electricity available. Just bite the sheet and you'll be able to talk on your [cellular] phone."
Overall: ★★★

Ghosts

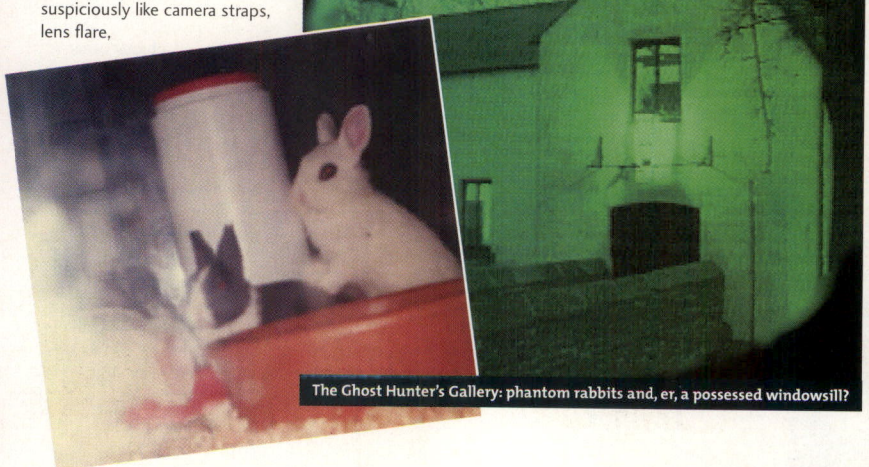
GHOSTBUSTING: **JEREMY SMITH**
jsmith@meridiantv.com

CHINGLE ALL THE WAY

Name: Chingle Hall
What is it? "My nights of indifference in the Most Haunted House in Britain." With added history.
Where you'll find it: http://www.bager.demon.co.uk
What's it like? A mind-boggling 21 spooks reputedly haunt this 700-year-old house near Preston. Most often encountered are the poltergeist in the kitchen, numerous ghostly monks and a small black cat. The author of this site has stayed overnight at Chingle Hall four times with various friends, and his matter-of-fact reports of the flipping scary things that have happened to them are enough to prove that ghosts exist. If they're true. Feel a chill or two run down your spine as you read of cold spots, communications with a dead monk, unexplained power cuts and flying plates. Brrr.
Upside: Not a glimmering of New Age nonsense.
Downside: Why are there only two crap pictures?
Typical quote: "We began to ask questions to the ghost and it responded by moving my hand." Hmm...
Overall: ★★★★

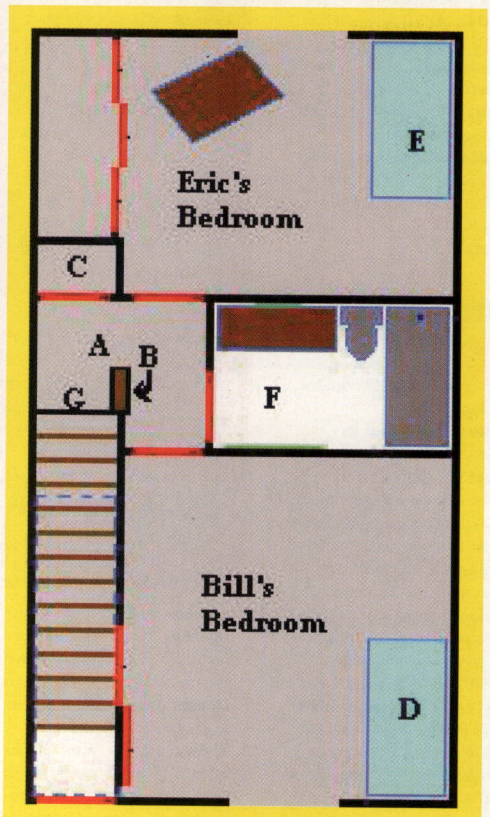
IT MUST BE TRUE

Name: The Ghost Hunter's Gallery
What is it? Lots of spooky pictures collected from around the globe.
Where you'll find it: http://www.aone.com/~starwest/
What's it like? This is amazing – 147 gen-ooh-ine pictures of REAL ghosts. No messing, these are spooks for sure. People might say it's funny how quite a few of these spectres look suspiciously like camera straps, lens flare, cigar smoke, water droplets on the lens or double exposures, but they're just spoilsports. Show me dem ghosts!
Upside: Look at the pics and make up your own mind.
Downside: Not a sceptical byte to be found on the site.
Typical quote: "Is this ectoplasmic ghost perhaps deceased rabbits who are earthbound and enjoy being around other rabbits?"
Overall: ★★★


The Ghost Hunter's Gallery: phantom rabbits and, er, a possessed windowsill?

HotSpot!

Name: Tigger's Haunted Apartment
What is it? A fascinating diary of paranormal happenings in some bloke's flat.
Where you'll find it: http://www.oaktree.net/tigger/ghost.html
What's it like? You'd best read this with the light on – it's funkin' scary. After living for two years with a "funny feeling" in his flat, sceptic Tigger was persuaded to try meditation last Christmas. Weeks of low level but nonetheless terrifying poltergeist activity ended when, in a trance, Tigger saw terrifying scenes of domestic violence and murder replayed before him. You can read the whole ongoing story on the Net. If you dare.
Upside: It'll make you believe.
Downside: It'll keep you awake at night.
Typical quote: "They were both just kind of standing there, watching me. I was trying to go to sleep and was very tired so I asked them to leave me be. I didn't feel any kind of annoyance on their part..."



THINGS THAT GO BOUNCE...

This is the upstairs of Tigger's apartment, where the ghosts live. His bed (D) has shaken him awake, he's seen a ghostly cloud in the hallway (A), and his lighter jumped from the stairs (G) to a nearby shelf (B). More frighteningly, strange marks appeared on his bathroom floor (F) and he saw the apparition of a little girl fall on the same spot after being shot by her ghostly father. Not surprisingly, his cat doesn't like it much there either.

NEED TO DO A LITTLE RESEARCH...

Name: Ghost Hunting In Lincolnshire
What is it? A somewhat half-hearted attempt to introduce the darker side of Lincolnshire to the Web.
Where you'll find it: http://egrorian.internetfci.com/~mkd/index2.html
What's it like? Bloke starts on-line collection of Lincolnshire ghost stories. Bloke encourages passing Netters to contribute. Bloke copies a few lacklustre tales out of some books and newspapers. Bloke sits back and hopes that on-line Lincolnshire and the Grimsby tribe will write his site for him. They don't, of course. Bloke finds a new hobby but forgets to cancel his subscription to the Internet. This is the result. But if you pop along and e-mail him your Lincolnshire-related spooky tale, it will surely get better.
Upside: This could be an excellent historical archive.
Downside: Content please, Mr Webmaster!
Typical quote: "Not too many details on this one at the moment as I need to do a little research at the *Grimsby Evening Telegraph.*"
Overall: ★

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

Name: George Kanigowski's Paranormal Home Page
What is it? George's personal ghost encounters and pictures.
Where you'll find it: http://www.innotts.co.uk/~georgek/
What's it like? George is trying to come to terms with the unusual appeal he has for transparent dead people. He's had several run-ins with less coy members of the deceased community and has the pictures to prove it. He also kindly provides tips on how to capture the invisible realm on film. This ghost-attracting tendency seems be hereditary – George's uncle is a veritable martyr to the ectoplasm and claims to have photographed the Gliding Priest of Canterbury Cathedral.
Upside: Gives both sides of the Do They Exist? argument.
Downside: But he only believes one of them.
Typical quote: "A regiment of soldiers marched towards me in pairs. They gazed fixedly ahead as they exited through the door behind me. Instead of being frightened, I curiously studied their quiff hair and their white ashen uniforms."
Overall: ★★

Tasteless

SICK BOY: **DAVE PAPE**
davepape@dial.pipex.com

HARRIS DIES AND GOES TO HELL

Name: Vomitus Maximus Museum
What is it? The pictures *Take Hart* sent back.
Where you'll find it: http://www.vomitus.com/
What's it like? Chicago gouache-monster, R S Connett, is totally hacked off with modern life – and has been since about 1979. His reaction? Necking bottles of gin and sheets of trips, then painting whatever comes into his scarred napper. Fair play to him for resisting the Mills and Boon jacket commissions, but this really is no way to run a nervous system. And he'll probably be doing MTV animations within five years anyway.
Upside: You can order reprints from the virtual gallery.
Downside: A picture called 'Corpselovers' (1981, $250). Can you guess what it is?
Typical quote: "Bongo is my aborted son who waits for me in hell. He is waiting there for me to die so he can have his revenge upon me for forcing his mother to have him torn from her womb..." All allegorical, of course. OR IS IT?
Overall: ★★★★

MATE, YOUR FLIES ARE UNDONE

Name: Squashed Bug Zoo
What is it? The sticky pages in your scrapbook.
Where you'll find it: http://squashed.roach.org/zoo.html
What's it like? A gallery of crushed minibeast pictures. Roll up, click on the thumbnail images, retrieve a scan of a hammered arthropod, then gloat, saying stuff like, "Always bet on the guy with the endoskeleton". And the punch line is? Well, the scans are a generous 300 dots per inch, which means that the images are about two feet across. So visually, you're lying face down in six-legged corpsemash. Now hurry back to your role-playing games, *ACDC* shirt wearer.
Upside: They're just little broken-down machines, really.
Downside: Little machines covered in cack and bulging with yellow phlegm.
Typical quote: "This picture's of some kind of beetle thing that Mystery Roach found lurking in his house. He was quoted as saying, 'These things usually live in my wood pile and sometimes hitch a ride inside when I bring in logs for my stove. Little bastards.' "
Overall: ★★★

Mince like an Egyptian: Mr MeatMation in Tony Gubba lookalike shocker!

MEAT THE FOLKS!

Name: MeatMation
What is it? One woman's photo love story co-starring half a pound of pork fat.
Where you'll find it: http://www.cais.com/frisch/meatmation/
What's it like? She completed her photography and puppetry course, her CV in tatters. Beejam were knocking out chickens and burgers on special. An afternoon of greasy smells in the summer heat, and MeatMation was born. There's no plot, scant irony, a few links, and a stark reminder that you are charnel and you eat charnel.
Upside: We're spared the organic timelapse photography.
Downside: By a total absence of "mation".
Typical quote: "Pa was retrieved ever-so-gently from his corner and placed over a spit. Wrecking the Ikea furniture in the kitchen, Mr Beefy whipped together a quick cooking fire, spinning Pa and waiting for all his Texas goodness to cook."
Overall: ★★★

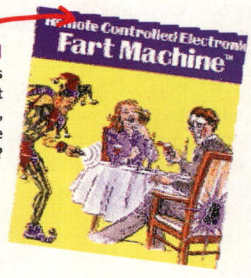
MAN! SHITES (DOG).

Name: The Dog Poo Page
What is it? A multimedia paean to the kerbstone Bockwurst.
Where you'll find it: http://www.bond.net/~keitht/
What's it like? Almost exactly what you'd expect. Tour the scatological gardens (though an urban tour would be more sensual), learn to cook Feces Pieces Pie, read poems, or play Assemble The Dog. And here's the only surprise: the dog parts don't include poo.
Upside: That's me broken from the old tasteless site habit.
Downside: Name any three students in the world that wouldn't have made this site just the same. You can't, can you?
Typical quote: "6oz cream cheese, cup sugar, cup milk, half cup fresh creamy dog faeces."
Overall: ★★

Name: Farts.com
What is it? For those that talk with the Denser Breath.
Where you'll find it: http://www.farts.com/
What's it like? Debate, diary, dietary advice and down-load, the common theme here being Hosiery Accident Type B. Hear the fart of the day, visit the fart archive and gen up on farting diet tips, courtesy of Dr Rex Breefs. You can also visit the Fart Mart and lay your sweaty hands on a Jurassic Fart T-shirt, alongside more traditional wares, such as whoopee cushions, warning stickers and fart powder. Or why not get involved and e-mail your own sonic boom to the site? Because you'll chicken out when you hear the sheer gas/solid brinksmanship of the previous submissions.
Upside: Immortalise your bodily emissions on-line.
Downside: All of 14-year-old America is competing with you for bandwidth.
Typical quote: "Our flatulent friend should realise that while he brought tears to the eyes of dozens, he will bring smiles to the faces of thousands."

TROUSER-COUGH TECH

The earliest whoopee cushions were scrappy medieval affairs made from animal bowels sewn together. So what has the Digital Age done for fart jokes?

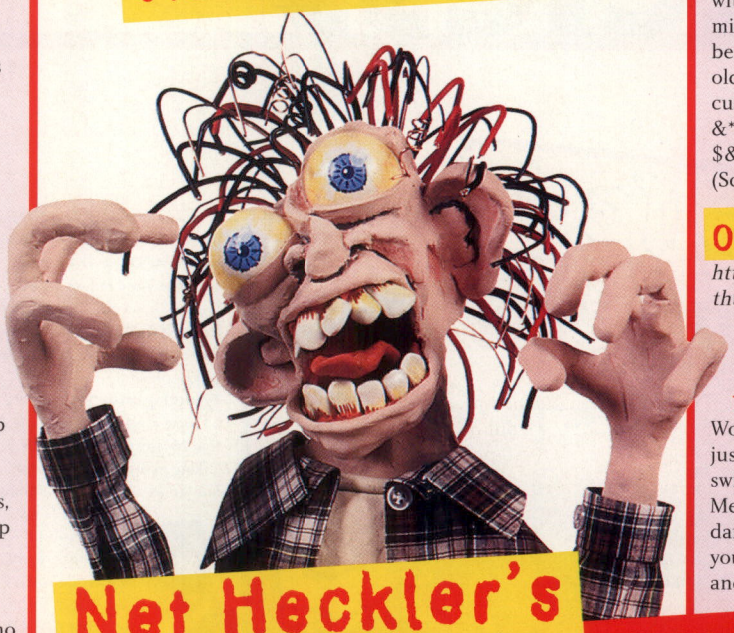


Remote Control
Trigger simulated farting events when and whence you please. Is it optical or analogue radio? Hell, when it promises such awesome social power, who cares?

Miniaturisation
"Le Farter" chirps and booms like a pair of 8-lb cheeks, yet nestles snugly in the palm of your hand. Guaranteed to break the ice at parties, funerals crowded elevators, job interviews etc.

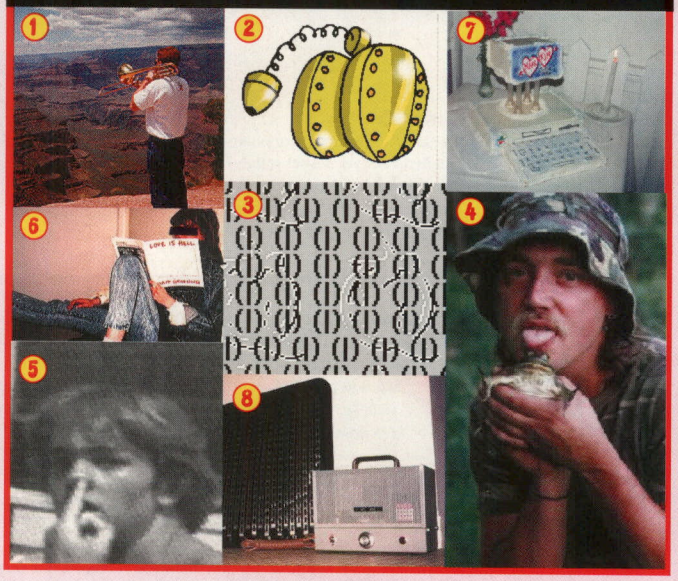
Digital Audio
The Fartcorder records your hideous flatulence for on-line down-load in General MIDI sample dump format or something. *Orbital* bought three.

QUICK! PASS THE CYBERBUCKET! IT'S...



Net Heckler's Web Crimes

As that bloke with the lamp shade on his head once sang, "Virtual insanity. Is what. We're living in". Well, this lot obviously aren't helping. Come, dent your foreheads with me, as we dodge the tramps and dive headfirst into this month's skip of shonky Net junk.



OFFENDER 1

http://www.missouri.edu/~cceric/index.html

THE CRIME: Tromboning.

THE EVIDENCE: So if the saxophone is sexy, the violin suave and the cello downright depressing, then the trombone is... The trombone is... Good at knocking people's hats off? Lacking the jazzy gymnastics of the trumpet and the big, fat, crap hilarity of the tuba, you can't help but feel sorry for the trombone, forever damned to the two-tone tradition: up tempo = farty-jolly; down tempo = injured cow. Obviously peeved at the amount of guitar tab pages knocking about the Net, the author of The Trombone Page has decided to hack up his spittle on-line. As you'd expect, there's the obligatory parpling for attention with farting cattle sound files, but it's the photo gallery that throws up some clues as to the sonic frustrations of the roundly ignored warbles of the trombonist. Image number one introduces you to a serial pie-eater (who looks like he's strolled straight out of a Gary Larson strip), brandishing his instrument and "LOUD IS GOOD" splashed across his T-shirt. Image number two (and far more worrying) shows us the site master himself, perched on the edge of the Grand Canyon and purposefully emptying his lungs through his instrument. A primal moment that was no doubt followed by the trampling of the author by a stampede of worried cattle.

OFFENDER 2

http://www.netset.com/~maddog/testicle.html

THE CRIME: Using The Internet As A Phone Sketchbook.

THE EVIDENCE: On the ever uneasy easel of the cyberartist community, for every David Hockney there are a thousand Rolf Harrises scrawling for attention. One such example of a quick-draw talentectomy is the ever-growing gallery charmingly entitled Testicles Of Famous People. The artist has done Albert Einstein, Bill Clinton, Michael Jackson, Boris Karloff, Charles Manson, Bill Gates, Elvis Presley and almost the entire cast of *Star Wars*. Although, weirdly enough, he's yet to get round to doing a self-portrait.

OFFENDER 3

http://www.hooked.net/users/hodad/butts.htm

THE CRIME: Finding Humour In Brackets.

THE EVIDENCE: Internet jokes, then. Funny ha-ha, funny peculiar or funny-how-every-time-I-access-pages-like-this-I-have-this-strange-compulsion-to-hurl-my-monitor-out-of-a-window? Here's one that I threw out earlier. You have to click three times to get in, and you do have to suffer the author's dreadful brains, but finally, there it is: a thousand blinking ASCII butts. Or "open bracket small 'l' closed bracket", as it's known to those who have much better things to do with their time. ASCII art is the artistic equivalent to crocheting with a typewriter, and is the kind of mindless hobby our generation should be pursuing when its banged up in an old people's home and dribbling custard over its computer keyboard. &*(@##□□&*((!&#!)!)&&[];;;)++0 $&)0&)&`□□□□!#*□!($)(()□%$$[{] (Scattered Cutlery, 1997.)

OFFENDER 4

http://members.aol.com/thugiegodz/thugie.html

THE CRIME: Shaking Your Hand And Then Kicking Your Face. But Not Really.

THE EVIDENCE: "Welcome To The World Of The Thuggie Godz! We are just a bunch of guys from NYC who swill Jack Daniels, go camping like Men, control the pit when we go out dancing, and we'll do your sister while your mom watches!!!" Get on the Net and meet interesting people, they said. Make friends with like-minded people, they said... With a cast of characters photo gallery that looks like a *Crime Watch* appeal for repeat-offender wrestlers, dare you confront tattooed angler Pete The Witch, "now residing in South Florida and casting spells on lonely housewives". Or pop tart Franny, whose "gravy will tantalise your taste buds"? Or toad-licking, walking moustache Thuggie Ed, "trying to speak in full sentences and throwing stools across the bar"? If the Internet is the new rock 'n' roll, the Thuggiegodz are the shred of toilet paper clinging to the bulging haemorrhoids of a Eurovision roadie's arse, and about as about as hard as *The Daily Mail* crossword. "Camping like Men." I mean, really...

OFFENDER 5

http://www.lafayette.edu/bukicsr/SM.html

THE CRIME: Leaving A Home Page Unattended.

THE EVIDENCE: Scraping through the rubbish of the Internet wheelie-bin, you occasionally come across the kind of stray page that's so mysteriously wrapped up in its own private madness that even its author has disowned it. The kind of page with no links forward and no links back. The kind of page specifically built to be escape-proof for anybody unfortunate enough to bash into it. Why are they here? What do they want from us? And are there any signs of intelligence? Um... So here it is, existing without apology, marooned on the Web and serving no conceivable purpose whatsoever: the memories of Saint Mark recalled through a sequence of photographs showing a garage, a skinny teen flexing his biceps and a man picking

his nose. If you can work out what's going on, consult your doctor immediately.

OFFENDER 6

http://members.aol.com/biteoftheb/rogues.htm

THE CRIME: Boiling Your Emotional Lobsters In Public.

THE EVIDENCE: For better or worse, simply having access to a computer is the only qualification required for Web acceptance. While I loudly condone this Utopian approach as much as I do the flinging of rotten fruit at the fun-crushing Net police, there are times when a virtual bouncer swaggering on-line to rough up the odd undesirable wouldn't go entirely amiss. One such candidate for a sound cyberclipping round the ear is the shrivelled invertebrate cowering behind The Rogue's Gallery Of Love. Ladies, imagine the terror of your ex-boyfriend putting your photo up on the Web for all to see, accompanied by a bitterness-masquerading-as-whimsy summation of your "performance". The mass of spilling mistoks suggest that Mr Rogue probably knocked up the page while he was knocking back the gin, but I was still biting a sizeable chunk out of my fist by the end of it, and wouldn't mind reclaiming that half-pound of flesh. The disclaimer at the top of the page says that he'll remove any images if one of his conquests discovers herself depicted. Fake-mailers: the bait's there, so what are you waiting for?

OFFENDER 7

http://www.voicenet.com/~bjorkman/Cake.html

THE CRIME: Baking A Wedding Cake In The Shape Of A Quadra 660 AV Computer.

THE EVIDENCE: Other than the fact that when they cut the cake, the entire building short-circuited, there's not much more to add.

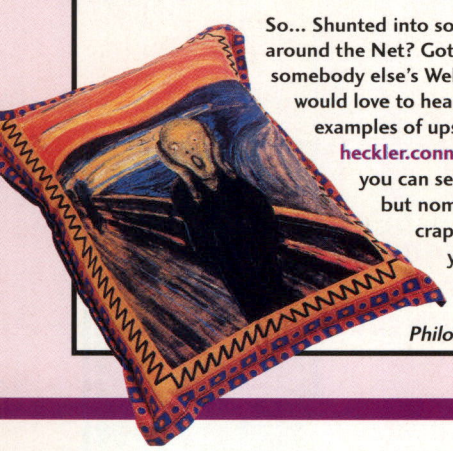
OFFENDER 8

http://www.ic-net.net/~soleil/urino/urinoe.html

THE CRIME: Extracting The Urine. And Then Charging For It.

THE EVIDENCE: Nowadays, for a medical condition to get you some sympathy, you need a suffering minor celebrity to flog the malaise to the masses: there's Oprah Winfrey and obesity; Keith Chegwin and alcoholism; Stephen Hendry and acne; Anthea Turner and irritable bowel syndrome... But who will champion the last great medical taboo? I'm talking about bed-wetting – no laughing matter, especially when your sleeping partner has a habit of drenching the duvet twice a night. So you've suffered the indignity of going to bed rustling like a packet of Twiglets in a cellophane nightie, tried everything bar sleeping in the local long-jump pit, and things are only made worse when the ignorant majority suggest that it's nothing that a tactically-placed pipe and a measuring jug wouldn't sort out. In other words, you're desperate. Thankfully, I can reveal that the Internet is offering temporary relief to those straining their potatoes in their sleep – the world's first anti-bed-wetting device is now on-line and available to order. Unfortunately, bar the picture of a sinister contraption that looks like it administers a mild electric shock every time you splash the sheets, I can't actually tell you how it works. Oh, just go to sleep with your legs or something.

GIVE US YOUR CRAP AND WIN A PRIZE!



Cam Winstanley

So... Shunted into some tat on your travels around the Net? Got yourself trapped in somebody else's Web bin? Then Net Heckler would love to hear from you. Send your examples of upsetting on-line idiocy to heckler.connect@futurenet.co.uk As you can see, he accepts any old shite, but nominate the cream of the crap, and you could receive your very own screaming pillow, courtesy of Net nuts, *The Unemployed Philosopher's Guild.*

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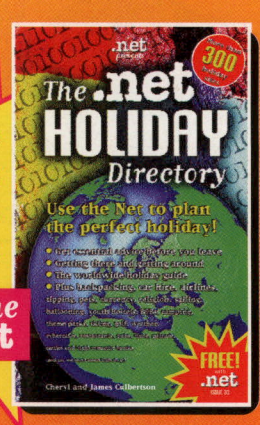
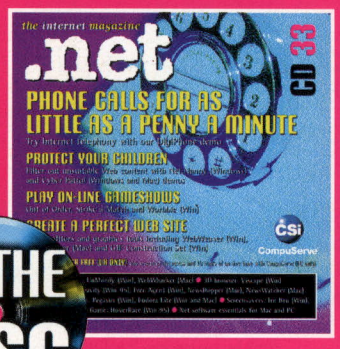


A TASTE OF THE OUT HOW TO OF IT WITH .net



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Space Mails

GLOBAL iNTERnET

Global Internet are chuffed to offer the writer of our Star Space Mail six month's Net access, completely free!

SPEAK YOUR BRAINS!

So, d'you want to kiss us or kick us? And what did you reckon to the CD? We want YOUR thoughts on our debut issue – and any other Net nonsense, for that matter. Feel free to space-mail us at **mail.connect@futurenet.co.uk** or snail-mail us at ***Connect*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW**. In the meantime, here are some e-mails from you lot about our 16-page sample issue, which barged into *.net*, *PC Gamer*, *PC Format* and *Total Film*.

Dear Connect

Re: Louise Brown's rather unfair review of the marvellous mammary fest So Many Breasts So Little Time in your Love & Sex section. "Why oh why oh why is this so entertaining for men?" she asks. Well, I can think of two fairly hefty reasons for starters...

D Crosier
dcrosier@horn.demon.co.uk

Don't know about you , but we think the e-mail address pretty much says it all...

Dear Connect

Loved the sample supplement. I look forward to the first issue. Anyway, I saw the bit on cool sound files and thought you might like these ones that I use for "start up" and "shut down".

They're taken from the series *Blake's 7*, so now all us sad oldies can sit back and say, "Aahhh, those were the days". I've also included a pic of me with my girlfriend Mel (left) and her workmate Jackie (right). And I have a Web site called Nude Stars Archive *(http://www.terror.u-net.com/ nick1.html)*, although I'm not sure if it's suitable to be mentioned in the mag. If not, I suppose the *Connect* team can still have a good old perv.

Nick Macfarren
tartan@terror.u-net.com

Flattery will get you anywhere. Well, it will for the first few issues. We've had a perv and you've had your plug – now cyberskidaddle back to your sci-fi-and-porn-postered bedroom, y'cheeky tinker.

Dear Connect

I have read *.net* mag since issue one, so naturally I was interested in *.net*'s recommendation of *Connect*.

The article on downloading interesting sounds to spice up your computer took my fancy. Imagine my disappointment when a total of eight sounds resulted in a "file not found" message.

I don't think this is a very good advert for a new magazine. If you're going to offer information, be it articles, links or whatever, at least have the sense to check the validity of them first. One or two, okay that's kinda acceptable, but eight? Come on guys, this is not good.

Chris Andrews
webmaster@redditch.com

Sleeves rolled up for a lengthy reply... Chris, think about it. Imperfect human beings make imperfect machines. We live in a wired world where computers "crash", files are "deleted" and systems "go down" and, as such, the Web stutters along with it.

Sometimes pages disappear because the curator's computer conks out on him. Sometimes pages disappear because the curator gets fed up with maintaining his own site. Sometimes pages go down screaming and then suddenly reappear a week later with a new address. I'm sure you can appreciate that we have no control over this. Nevertheless, we do check *every single* Web address before going to press in our battle against those few faulty URLs and bogus addresses, and triple-check for spilling mistoks in addresses. WE'RE PROFESSIONALS!

Okay, so eight out of 40 sound files is a bit crap (actually, 37 of them still worked last time we looked). But we suspect by your moody mail that even if all 40 were there, you'd still be complaining about the irregular tracking on the Helvetica font, or something.

Dear Connect

I enjoyed your collection of so-called paranormal images taken from the Net in your sample issue and have taken the liberty of responding to your question "Bullshit Or Not?". And my answers are as follows: ghost rabbit – bullshit; goatsucker victim – bullshit; alien image on television – bullshit; UFO – bullshit; image of Christ on table – definitely bullshit.

Charles Granger
cagran@demon.co.uk

Burn the unbeliever! Burn him! Burn him! BURN HIM!

Dear Connect

I am writing to complain about your smug and flippant comments about the contents of the Internet site Why Do Cats Paint *(http://netlink.co.nz/~monpa)*. As an owner of a talented cat who happens to enjoy painting, I take great offence at comments such as "Can their heads ever be repaired again?".

How dare you suggest that I, or any my friends who express an interest in cat painting, are anything less than sane? Cat painting is a passion of mine and, although unusual, gives me, my cat and those who see the final pieces a great deal of pleasure.

Saying, "if you've recently discovered your cat has been making some half decent sketches while he's been on the phone to one of this mates, you can contact the organisation and arrange an exhibition" is also extremely misleading. Not just any cat can paint and neither are the results always worthy of exhibition. It takes a lot of time, effort and love to train these intelligent and sensitive animals to express themselves through painting. What a pity you've chosen to dismiss an activity that's slowly but surely gathering respect in the art world with such cheap sarcasm and complete ignorance.

I suggest you raise your standards, and call a halt to criticising things you don't know about.

Mrs G Johnson
(e-mail address withheld)

Um...

Dear Connect

Greg here from Greece.

I bet that *Connect* will be a VERY GOOD mag. Will I be able to find it in Greece? Keep up the good work!

Greg 8-)
imzadi@hol.gr

So there we were waiting for the obligatory "We Think Your Mag's Great" e-mail to arrive so we can bung it on our first letters page, and it comes all the way from Southern Europe. Where the magazine is only available through subscription. So, Greg. Thanks for the mail, but we suspect that the only time you'll find our magazine in Greece is when it's surrounded by a battered chipolata and a large portion of chips.

Compo Update!

With the supplement appearing in four magazines, we expected a fair response to our competition to win a Packard Bell Pentium PC. Over 2,500 entries later, and we've learned a lesson. And that lesson is, never, ever, EVER say, "Just pop your entry in an envelope to..." Our fingers are raw. The editorial assistant has lifted the lids off three fingernails. And somebody's thumb has fallen off. So it's postcards and e-mails only for the compo on page 121.

Just to recap, to get a chance of winning the multimedia monster, all you had to do was fill in a mini-questionnaire, including your three favourite movies, albums and telly programmes of all time.

We'd just like to say a big thanks for the massive response – your entries are giving us a decent idea of what you'd like to see more of in the mag. The winner of the Packard Bell PC and five runners-up (who'll receive a six-month subscription to the mag), will be announced in the next issue of *Connect*, out July 3rd.

STAR SPACE-MAIL

Dear Connect

Nobody could have failed to notice your supplement, which came free with the latest issue of *Total Film*. Brash, colourful, revolting front cover... But I wonder if I'm the only one out there who experienced a tinge of déjà vu when I started to actually read the thing?

Your site listings bare an uncanny resemblance to those found in a magazine called the *The .net Directory*. I dare say they'd be more than interested to see what you're doing with their ideas. I suggest you get your own.

F Phillips
philfer@dial.pipex.com

'F'. Can we call you 'F'? Plagiarism is, indeed, a despicable practice. But – and here's the rub – how do you plagiarise yourself? We ARE *The .net Directory* – sorry – WERE *The .net Directory*. We've got rid of the weird thin book shape, specially designed to slip down the shelving units of most reputable newsagents, tossed the bi-monthly format in the bin, scrubbed out the logo, come up with an innovative CD thingy and ditched everything bar the site review format (ain't broke, don't fix etc). 'F' – so very wrong but yet so very right. Well spotted, nonetheless, so have six month's free Net access on us. And that, by the way, was *our* idea...

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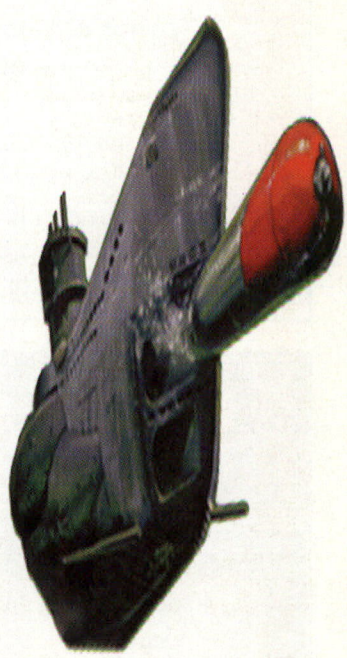

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http://www.acropoliscasinos.com/home3.html

WHO HELL THEY?

1 — http://acs2.bu.edu:8001/~pimentel/bjsweb.html

2 — http://members.aol.com/babepages2/index.html

3 — http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/1096/

4 — http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/7676/

5 — http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Set/9372/index.html

6 — http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Set/1099/

To celebrate the launch of *Connect*, we've got nearly two thousand quid's worth of PC up for grabs, courtesy of those charmers at Hi-Grade computers. How hell you win? Simply stare at the six celebs until a) you get scared or b) you identify their negativised mushes. A URL of a relevant fan site has been provided for those what get stuck...

Once you've worked out who's who (clue: they're all American), e-mail us your answers. To avoid confusion, we recommend you write the number first, *then* the name of the famous face. So, if you think Mystery Celeb Number One is Rula Lenska and Celeb Number Two is Cheryl Baker, then put 1) Rula Lenska and 2) Cheryl Baker etc etc...

What's on offer

This particular PC, commonly known in the computing community as The Axion Surfer MMX, comes with easy and instant access to the Internet (via Hi-Net), a shed-load of top games, a big screen, a mouse, a keyboard, some wires, a plug, absolutely NO BATTERIES and the following bells 'n' whistles...

- Windows 95
- One year's connection to the Internet via Hi-Net
- A super-fast CD-ROM drive, SVGA graphics card, two external speakers, 15-inch colour monitor and SoundBlaster Card
- Over 30 games and software applications, including MechWarrior, Wipeout, Assault Rig, MS Works for Windows 95 and something called The Complete Chef.

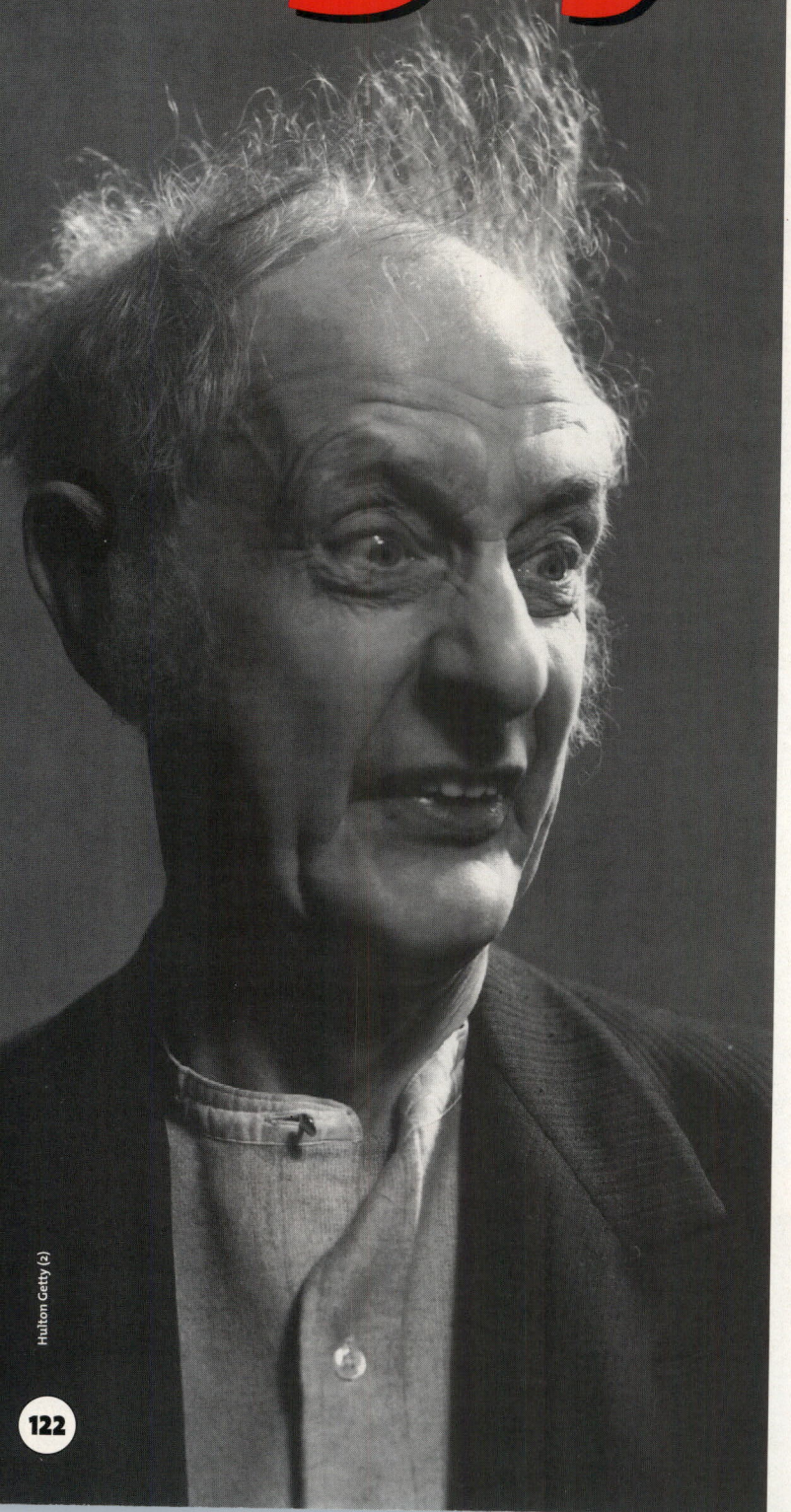
Should you not win, you may still be hankering after an ace PC. In which case, why not try contacting Hi-Net themselves on 0181 532 6123? They're very nice on the phone.

THE BIT ABOUT THE RULES AND THE EDITOR'S DECISIONS AND STUFF

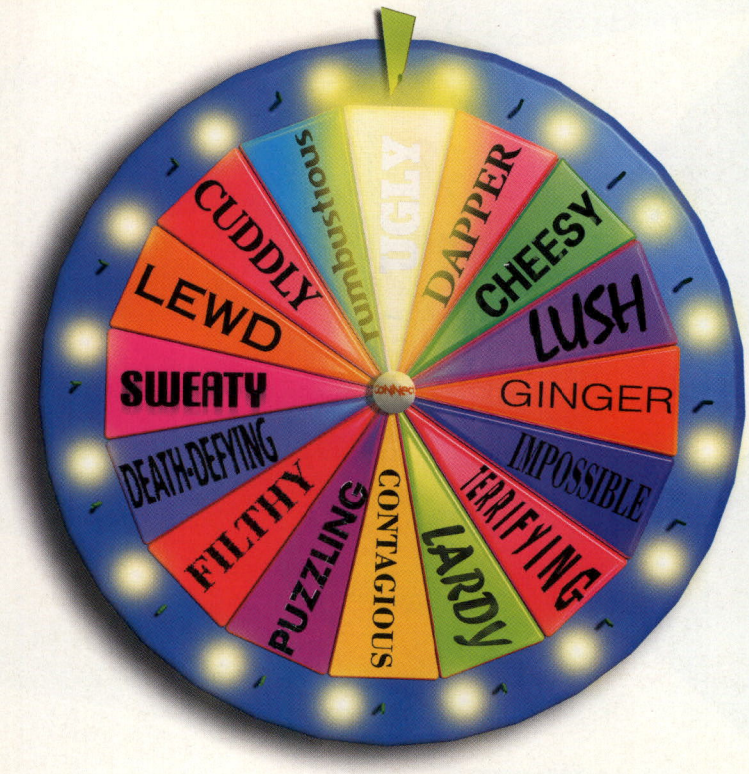
1. E-mail your entries, headed "PC Compo", to compo.connect@futurenet.co.uk. Best include your name and address along with your answers, so we can contact you, should you be the lucky winner. Alternatively, send a postcard (NO envelopes!) to PC Compo, *Connect* magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW
2. Multiple entries are not allowed.
3. Anyone who works for Future Publishing or Hi-Grade Computers Plc may not enter.
4. All entries must be received by Tuesday 1 July, 1997.
5. Winners will be pulled randomly from the office underpants. The editor's decision is made wearing these very pants, and is therefore very final.

Let's end with something...

Ugly



Hulton Getty (2)

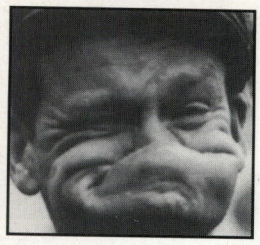


Not satisfied with outing baldies, fatties and glassy-eyed scientologists, our to-PC-or-not-to-PC culture seems to have finally reached logic meltdown. If Chris Evans instigating the sub-ironic Outing Of Ugliness on *TFI Friday* was hard enough for your eyes to stomach, wait until you see The Ugly Guys Contest **(http://www.gatech.edu/steve/ugly/).** An ill-organised Net anti-beauty contest for the facially-challenged, voters the world over are invited to resolve an in-jokey argument among a bunch of American students. All you have to do is nominate your favourite candidate Least Likely To Make Contact With The Opposite Sex.

Wisely hiding behind pseudonyms, there are eight rollingpin-battered noggins for you to chose from. So who's it gonna be? Is it Butterfly, who seems to have been born without shoulders and "is in love with a cartoon character"? Jake, a cross-eyed pug who looks like a low-rent Kevin Costner after bumping into too many lampposts? Dream, who has one of those terrifying faces you imagine appearing at your bedroom window at night? Moldy, who's smiling smugly like he's Not Really That Ugly, but confesses to being "hairy, surly and rude" (and as such has gained more votes than he's bargained for)? Or maybe it's the delightful Eggo, who has all the aesthetic appeal of a startled frog?

Results so far quite clearly show the favourite to be Daffy ("I enjoy shaving my head") who, to our eyes at least, looks like a cross between *Trainspotting's* Renton, a Hare Krishna who's strayed into bare-knuckle boxing to pay for his pamphlets, and a bag of discount mince. The unfortunate Daffy has received over 400 votes for his blemished mush, which we think is a little unfair. Because Chihuahua-in-a-wind-tunnel Jake's much, MUCH uglier. So much so that we've wasted about £50 on telephone bills voting for him to redress the balance.

Harsh? Mean-spirited? Inhumane? Just remember that, unlike the current rash of blushing nude celebrities exposed on-line and grotesque galleries of unfortunate freaks, these guys have quite happily slapped their unflattering photos Webwards for everyone to point at. They may not have been first in the queue when God handed out looks, but they were definitely last up when the dignity certificates were distributed. Cruel, cruel Internet... Long may you reign.



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